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LIFE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

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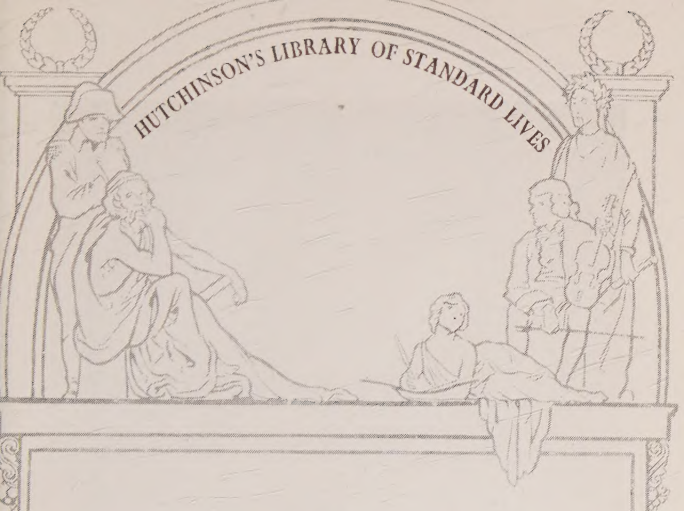
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THE LIFE OF
QUEEN ELIZABETH



From the picture by Nicholas Hilliard at Hatfield House.

Elizabeth



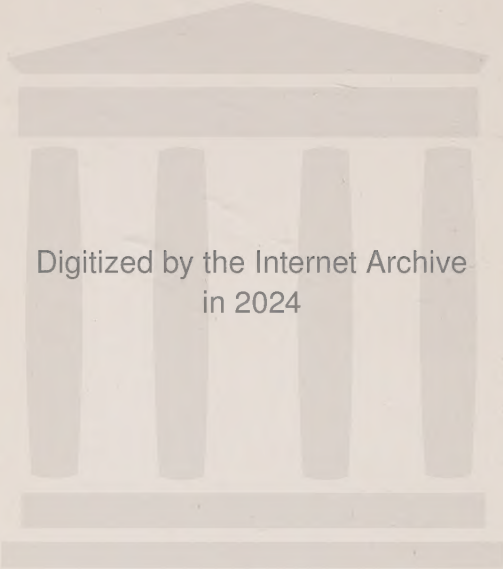
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THE LIFE OF Queen Elizabeth

By
AGNES STRICKLAND



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The Life of
QUEEN ELIZABETH

THE LIFE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

CHAPTER I

Birth of Elizabeth at Greenwich Palace—Chamber of the Virgins—Remark of her mother, Queen Anne Boleyn—Christening—Placed first in the succession—Marriage negotiation with France—Execution of her mother—Elizabeth declared illegitimate—Her governess—Appears at her brother's christening—Her early promise—Education—Her first letter—Patronised by Anne of Cleves and Katharine Howard—Residence with her sister Mary—Offered in Marriage to the heir of Arran—Proficiency in languages—Her early compositions—Her brother's love for her—Shares his studies—Her father's death—Her grief—Woody by Seymour, the lord admiral—Refuses his hand—Offended at his marriage with the queen-dowager—Princess Mary invites her to live with her—She resides with Queen Katharine Parr—Her governess, Mrs. Ashley, and Roger Ascham—Freedoms of the admiral—The queen's jealousy—Elizabeth removes to Cheston—Death and bequest of Queen Katharine Parr—The admiral's clandestine courtship of Elizabeth—Her governess Ashley sent to the Tower—Examination of Elizabeth—Restraint at Hatfield—Defends her governess—Letter to the Protector—Her confessions—Her governess superseded by Lady Tyrwhit—Disdainful conduct of Elizabeth—She writes again to the Protector—Serious scandals on Elizabeth—She intercedes for her governess—Execution of the admiral—Elizabeth's regard for his memory.

THE romantic circumstances of Elizabeth's birth, the vicissitudes of her childhood, and the lofty spirit with which she bore herself, amidst the storms and perils that darkened over her during

her sister's reign, invested her with almost poetic interest, as a royal heroine, before her title to the regal succession was ratified by the voice of a generous people, and the brilliant success of her government, during a long reign, surrounded her maiden diadem with a blaze of glory which has rendered her the most popular of our monarchs, and blinded succeeding generations to her faults.

It is not, perhaps, the most gracious office in the world to perform, with strict impartiality, the duty of a faithful biographer to a princess so endeared to national pride as Elizabeth, and to examine, by the cold calm light of truth, the flaws which mar the bright ideal of Spenser's *Glorianna*, and Shakespeare's

"Fair vestal throned by the west."

It has been truly said, however, that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*, and it is impossible to enter into the personal history of England's Elizabeth without showing that she occasionally forgot the dignity of the heroine among her ladies-in-waiting, and indulged in follies which the youngest of her maids-of-honour would have blushed to imitate. The web of her life was a glittering tissue, in which good and evil were strangely mingled, and as the evidences of friend and foe are woven together, without reference to the prejudices of either, or any other object than to show her as she was, the lights and shades must sometimes appear in strong and even painful opposition to each other, for such are the inconsistencies of human nature, such the littlenesses of human greatness.

Queen Elizabeth first saw the light at Greenwich Palace, the favourite abode of her royal parents, Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn. Her birth is thus quaintly but prettily recorded by the contemporary historian, Hall :—"On the 7th day of September, being Sunday, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, the queen was delivered of a faire ladye, on which day the Duke of Norfolk came home to the christening."

The apartment in which she was born was hung with tapestry representing the history of holy virgins, and was from that circumstance called the Chamber of the Virgins. When

the queen, her mother, who had eagerly anticipated a son, was told that she had given birth to a daughter, she endeavoured, with ready tact, to attach adventitious importance to her infant, by saying to the ladies in attendance :—"They may now, with reason, call this room the Chamber of Virgins, for a virgin is now born in it on the vigil of that auspicious day, on which the Church commemorates the nativity of the Virgin Mary."

Notwithstanding the bitter disappointment felt by King Henry at the sex of the infant, a solemn *Te Deum* was sung in honour of her birth, and the preparations for her christening were made with no less magnificence than if his hopes had been gratified by the birth of a male heir to the crown.

The solemnization of that sacred rite was appointed to take place on Wednesday, September 10th, the fourth day after the birth of the infant princess. On that day the lord mayor, with the aldermen and council of the city of London, dined together at one o'clock, and then, in obedience to their summons, took boat in their chains and robes, and rowed to Greenwich, where many lords, knights, and gentlemen, were assembled to witness the royal ceremonial. The Bishop of London, who performed the ceremony, received the infant at the church door of the Grey Friars, assisted by a grand company of bishops and mitred abbots ; and, with all the rites of the Church of Rome, this future great Protestant queen received the name of her grandmother, Elizabeth of York. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was her godfather, and the Duchess of Norfolk and Marchioness of Dorset her godmothers. After Elizabeth had received her name, Garter King-at-Arms cried aloud :—"God, of His infinite goodness, send a prosperous life and long, to the high and mighty Princess of England, Elizabeth !"

The Lady Margaret Bryan, whose husband, Sir Thomas Bryan, was a kinsman of Queen Anne Boleyn, was preferred to the office of governess-in-ordinary to Elizabeth, as she had formerly been to the Princess Mary : she was called "the lady mistress."

Elizabeth passed the first two months of her life at

Greenwich Palace, with the queen her mother, and during that period she was frequently taken for an airing to Eltham, for the benefit of her health. On December 2nd she was the subject of the following Order in Council :—

“The king's highness hath appointed that the Lady Princess Elizabeth (almost three months old) shall be taken from *hence* towards Hatfield upon Wednesday next week ; that on Wednesday night she is to lie and repose at the house of the Earl of Rutland at Enfield, and the next day to be conveyed to Hatfield, and there to remain with such household as the king's highness has established for the same.”

Hertford Castle was first named, but scratched through and changed to Hatfield.

A few weeks afterwards she became, in virtue of the Act of Parliament which settled the succession, in default of heirs male to Henry VIII., on the female issue of that monarch by Anne Boleyn, the heiress-presumptive to the throne, and her disinherited sister, the Princess Mary, was compelled to yield precedence to her.

Soon after this change in the prospects of the unconscious babe, she was removed to the palace of the Bishop of Winchester, at Chelsea, on whom the charge of herself and her extensive nursery appointments were thrust. When she was thirteen months old, she was weaned, and the preliminaries for this important business were arranged between the officers of her household and the Cabinet Ministers of her august sire, with as much solemnity as if the fate of empires had been involved in the matter. The following passages are extracted from a letter from Sir William Powlet to Cromwell, on this subject :—

“The king's grace, well considering the letter directed to you from my Lady Brian and other my lady princess' officers, his grace, with the assent of the queen's grace, hath fully determined the weaning of my lady princess to be done with all diligence.”

He proceeds to state that the little princess is to have the whole of any one of the royal residences thought best for her, and that consequently he has given orders for Langley to be put in order for her and her suite ; which orders, he adds :—

"This messenger bath, withal, a letter from the queen's grace to my Lady Brian, and that his grace and the queen's grace doth well and be merry, and all theirs, thanks be to God.—From Sarum, October 9th."

Scarcely was this nursery affair of State accomplished, before Henry exerted his paternal care in seeking to provide the royal weanling with a suitable consort, by entering into a negotiation with Francis I. of France for a union between this infant princess and the Duke of Angoulême, the third son of that monarch. Henry proposed that the young duke should be educated in England, and stipulated that he should hold the Duchy of Angoulême, independently of the French Crown, in the event of his coming to the crown of England through his marriage with Elizabeth.

The project of educating the young French prince, who was selected for the husband of the presumptive heiress of England, according to the manners and customs of the realm of which she might hereafter become the sovereign, was a sagacious idea, but Henry clogged the matrimonial treaty with conditions which it was out of the power of the King of France to ratify, and it proved abortive.

The tragic events which rendered Elizabeth motherless in her third year degraded her from the lofty position in which she had been placed by the unjust but short-lived paternal fondness of her capricious father. By the sentence which Cranmer had passed on the marriage of her parents and her own birth, Elizabeth was branded with the stigma of illegitimacy, and was for a time exposed to the sort of neglect and contempt which is too often the lot of children to whom that reproach applies.

Much of the future greatness of Elizabeth may reasonably be attributed to the judicious training of her sensible and conscientious governess, Lady Bryan, combined with the salutary adversity which deprived her of the pernicious pomp and luxury that had surrounded her cradle while she was treated as the heiress of England. The first public action of Elizabeth's life was her carrying the chrisom of her infant brother, Edward VI., at the christening solemnity of that prince. She was borne in

the arms of the Earl of Hertford, brother of the queen her step-mother, when the assistants in the ceremonial approached the font; but when they left the chapel, the train of her little grace, just four years old, was supported by Lady Herbert, the sister of Katharine Parr, as, led by the hand of her elder sister, the Princess Mary, she walked with mimic dignity, in the returning procession, to the chamber of the dying queen.

At that period the royal ceremonials of Henry VIII.'s Court were blended with circumstances of wonder and tragic excitement, and strange and passing sad, it must have been, to see the child of the murdered Queen Anne Boleyn framing her innocent lips to lisp the name of mother to her for whose sake she had been rendered motherless, and branded with the stigma of illegitimacy. In all probability the little Elizabeth knelt to her, as well as to her cruel father, to claim a benediction in her turn, after the royal pair had proudly bestowed their blessing on the newly baptized prince, whose christening was so soon to be followed by the funeral of the queen his mother.

It was deemed an especial mark of the favour of her royal father, that Elizabeth was considered worthy of the honour of being admitted to keep company with the young prince her brother. She was four years older than him, and having been well trained and gently nurtured herself, was "better able," says Heywood, "to teach and direct him, even from the first of his speech and understanding." Cordial and entire was the affection betwixt this brother and sister, insomuch that he no sooner began to know her but he seemed to acknowledge her, and she, being of more maturity, as deeply loved him. On the second anniversary of Edward's birth, when the nobles of England presented gifts of silver and gold, and jewels, to the infant heir of the realm, the Lady Elizabeth's grace gave the simple offering of a shirt of cambric worked by her own hands. She was then six years old. Thus early was this illustrious lady instructed in the feminine accomplishment of needlework, and directed to turn her labours in that way to a pleasing account.

From her cradle, Elizabeth was a child of the fairest promise;

and possessed the art of attracting the regard of others. Wriothesley, who visited the two princesses, when they were together at Hertford Castle, December 17th, 1539, was greatly impressed with the precocious understanding of the young Elizabeth, of whom he gives the following pretty account :—

“ I went then to my Lady Elizabeth's grace, and to the same made his majesty's most hearty commendations, declaring that his highness desired to hear of her health, and sent his blessing; she gave humble thanks, inquiring after his majesty's welfare, and that with as great a gravity as she had been forty years old. If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove of no less honour than beseemeth her father's daughter, whom the Lord long preserve.”

The feelings of jealous dislike, which the Princess Mary naturally felt towards her infant rival, were gradually subdued, by the endearing caresses of the innocent child, when they became sisters in adversity. When Mary again incurred the displeasure of her capricious sire, and was forbidden to come within a certain distance of the Court, Elizabeth became once more the associate of her little brother's sports, and afterwards shared his studies. The early predilection of these royal children for their learning was remarkable. “ As soon as it was light they called for their books; so welcome,” says Heywood, “ were their *horæ matutinæ* that they seemed to prevent the night's repose for the entertainment of the morrow's schooling.” They took no less delight in the practice of their religious exercises and the study of the Scriptures, to which their first hours were exclusively devoted. “ The rest of the forenoon,” continues our author, “ breakfast, alone, excepted, they were instructed in languages and science, or moral learning, collected out of such authors as did best conduce to the instruction of princes, and when he was called out to his more active exercises in the open air, she betook herself to her lute or viol, and when wearied with that, employed her time in needlework.”

On the marriage of the king, her father, with Anne of Cleves, in 1540, the young Elizabeth expressed the most ardent desire to see the new queen, and to be permitted to pay her the homage of a daughter. When her governess made this request,

in the name of her royal pupil, to the king, he is said to have replied, "That she had had a mother so different from the queen, that she ought not to wish to see her, but she had his permission to write to her majesty." On which, the following letter, probably the first ever written by Elizabeth, was addressed by her to her new step-mother.

"Madame,

"I am struggling between two contending wishes—one is—my impatient desire to see your majesty, the other that of rendering the obedience I owe to the commands of the king my father, which prevent me from leaving my house till he has given me full permission to do so. But I hope that I shall be able shortly to gratify both these desires. In the meantime, I entreat your majesty to permit me to show, by this billet, the zeal with which I devote my respect to you as my queen, and my entire obedience to you as to my mother. I am too young and feeble to have power to do more than to felicitate you with all my heart in this commencement of your marriage. I hope that your majesty will have as much goodwill for me as I have zeal for your service."

This letter is without date or signature, and Leti, who rarely gives his authorities, does not explain the source whence it was derived ; but there is no reason to dispute its authenticity. He tells us "that Anne of Cleves, when she saw Elizabeth, was charmed with her beauty, wit, and endearing caresses—that she conceived the most tender affection for her—and when the conditions of her divorce were arranged, she requested, as a great favour, that she might be permitted to see her sometimes—adding, "that to have had that young princess for her daughter would have been greater happiness to her than being queen." The paternal pride of Henry was gratified at this avowal, and he agreed that she should see Elizabeth as often as she wished, provided that she was only addressed by her as the Lady Anne of Cleves.

Elizabeth found no less favour in the eyes of her new step-mother, the young and beautiful Katharine Howard, who being cousin-german to her unhappy mother, Anne Boleyn, took the young princess under her especial protection, and treated her with every mark of tenderness and consideration. On the day when she was publicly acknowledged by Henry as his queen,

she directed that the Princess Elizabeth should be placed opposite to her at table because she was of her own blood and lineage. It was also observed that at all the fêtes and public shows which took place in honour of her marriage with the king, Queen Katharine gave the Lady Elizabeth the place of honour nearest to her own person, saying "that she was her cousin." It was supposed that this partial step-mother intended to use her powerful influence with the king for the repeal of the Act of Parliament which had pronounced Elizabeth to be illegitimate, and thus would she have been given a second time the preference to her elder sister in the succession. Notwithstanding the favour which was shown to Elizabeth by the Howard queen, she was always entreating the king her father to allow her to remain with the Lady Anne of Cleves, for whom she ever manifested a very sincere regard. The attachments formed by Elizabeth in childhood and early youth were of an ardent and enduring character, as will be hereafter shown.

After the disgrace and death of Queen Katharine Howard, Elizabeth resided chiefly with her sister Mary, at Havering Bower. In the summer of 1543, she was present when Mary gave audience to the imperial ambassadors ; she was then ten years old. Soon after, King Henry offered her hand to the Earl of Arran for his son, in order to win his co-operation in his darling project of uniting the crowns of England and Scotland by a marriage between the infant queen, Mary Stuart, and his son Prince Edward. Perhaps the Scottish earl did not give Henry credit for the sincerity of a proposal so derogatory to the dignity of the Princess Elizabeth, for he paid little attention to this extraordinary offer, and espoused the interest of the French Court. According to Marillac, Henry had previously mentioned his intention of espousing Elizabeth to an infant of Portugal, but all Henry's matrimonial schemes for his children were doomed to remain unfulfilled, and Elizabeth, instead of being sacrificed in her childhood in some political marriage, had the good fortune to complete a most superior education under the auspices of the good and learned Katharine Parr, Henry's sixth queen and her fourth step-mother.

Elizabeth was a child of extraordinary acquirements, to which were added some personal beauty and very graceful manners. She had wit at command, and sufficient discretion to understand when and where she might display it. Those who knew her best were accustomed to say of her, "that God, who had endowed her with such rare gifts, had certainly destined her to some distinguished employment in the world." At the age of twelve she was considerably advanced in sciences, which rarely, indeed, at that era, formed part of the education of princesses. She understood the principles of geography, architecture, the mathematics, and astronomy, and astonished all her instructors by the facility with which she acquired knowledge. Her handwriting was beautiful, and her skill in languages remarkable. Like her elder sister, the Princess Mary, she was an accomplished Latin scholar, and astonished some of the most erudite linguists of that age by the ease and grace with which she conversed in that language. French, Italian, Spanish and Flemish, she both spoke and wrote with the same facility as her native tongue. She was fond of poetry, and sometimes made verses that were not devoid of merit, but she only regarded this as the amusement of her leisure hours, bestowing more of her time and attention on the study of history than anything else.

Elizabeth was indefatigable in her pursuit of this queenly branch of knowledge, to which she devoted three hours a day, and read works in all languages that afforded information on the subject. It was, however, in this predilection alone that she betrayed the ambition which formed the leading trait of her character. While thus fitting herself in her childhood for the throne, which as yet she viewed through a vista far remote, she endeavoured to conceal her object by the semblance of the most perfect humility, and affecting a love for the leisure and quiet of private life.

In the treaty between Henry VIII. and the Emperor Charles, in 1545, there was a proposal to unite Elizabeth in marriage to Philip of Spain, who afterwards became the Consort of her elder sister Mary. The negotiation came to nothing. The name of Elizabeth was hateful to Charles V. as the child of

Anne Boleyn. During the last illness of the king her father, Elizabeth chiefly resided at Hatfield House with the young prince her brother, whose especial darling she was. The tender love that endeared Edward and Elizabeth to each other, in infancy, appears to have ripened into a sweeter, holier friendship, as their kindred minds expanded, "for," says Sir Robert Naunton, "besides the consideration of blood, there was between these two princes a concurrence and sympathy of their natures and affections, together with the celestial bond, conformity in religion, which made them one." In December, 1546, when the brother and sister were separated, by the removal of Elizabeth to Enfield and Edward to Hertford, the prince was so much afflicted that she wrote to him, entreating him to be comforted, and to correspond with her.

The next time the royal brother and sister met was on January 30th, 1547, when the Earl of Hertford and Sir Anthony Brown brought young Edward privately from Hertford to Enfield, and there, in the presence of the Princess Elizabeth, declared to him and her the death of the king their father. Both of them received the intelligence with passionate tears, and they united in such lamentations as moved all present to weep. "Never," says Heywood, "was sorrow more sweetly set forth, their faces seeming rather to beautify their sorrow than their sorrow to cloud the beauty of their faces."

By the conditions of her royal father's will, Elizabeth was placed the third in the order of the royal succession after himself, provided her brother and sister died without lawful issue, and neither Queen Katharine Parr nor any future queen bore children to the king. In point of fortune, she was left on terms of strict equality with her elder sister—that is to say, with a life annuity of three thousand pounds a year, and a marriage portion of ten thousand pounds, provided she married with the consent of the king her brother and his council; otherwise she was to forfeit that provision.

More than one historian has asserted that Sir Thomas Seymour made a daring attempt to contract marriage with the youthful Princess Elizabeth, before he renewed his addresses to

his old love, Katharine Parr. Leti gives us a truly Frenchified version of the correspondence which passed between her and Seymour, exactly a month after the death of Henry VIII. ; for Seymour's letter, in which he requests the young princess to consent to ally herself to him in marriage, is dated February 26th, 1547 ; and Elizabeth, in her reply, February 27th, tells him, "That she has neither the years nor the inclination to think of marriage at present, and that she would not have any one imagine that such a subject had even been mentioned to her, at a time when she ought to be wholly taken up in weeping for the death of the king her father, to whom she owed so many obligations, and that she intended to devote at least two years to wearing black for him, and mourning for his loss ; and that even when she shall have arrived at years of discretion, she wishes to retain her liberty, without entering into any matrimonial engagement."

Four days after the admiral received this negative, he was the accepted lover of his former *fiancée*, the queen-dowager, Katharine Parr. Elizabeth, who had been, on the demise of the king her father, consigned by the council of the royal minor, her brother, to the care and tutelage of Queen Katharine, with whom she was then residing, was, according to our author, much displeased at the conduct of that lady, not only on account of the precipitation with which she had entered into a matrimonial engagement, which was considered derogatory to the honour due to the late king's memory, but because she had induced her to reject the addresses of the admiral, by representing to her how unsuitable such an alliance would be to her, in every point of view. Now, although the queen-dowager only performed her duty, as the widow of the deceased majesty of England, in giving such counsel to the orphan princess, to whom she had undertaken the office of a mother, her own proceedings, by rendering the motives of her advice questionable, excited reflections little to her advantage in the mind of Elizabeth, and perhaps sowed the first seeds of the fatal jealousy which afterwards divided them.

According to Leti, the Princess Mary, who was no less offended than Elizabeth, at the indecorous haste of their royal

step-mother's marriage, wrote to Elizabeth, offering her a residence in her house, entreating her to quit that of the queen-dowager, and come to her, that both might unite in testifying their disapproval of this unsuitable alliance.

Elizabeth, however, young as she was, had too much self-command to commit herself by putting a public affront on the best-loved uncle of the king her brother, who was by no means unlikely to supersede Somerset in his office of Protector; neither did she feel disposed to come to a rupture with the queen-dowager, whose influence with King Edward was considerable: therefore in reply to her sister, she wrote a very political letter, "telling her that it behoved them both to submit with patience to that which could not be cured, as neither of them were in a position to offer any objection to what had taken place, without making their condition worse than it was; observing, that they had to do with a very powerful party, without themselves possessing the slightest credit at Court; so that the only thing they could do was to dissemble the pain they felt at the disrespect with which their father's memory had been treated. She excuses herself from accepting Mary's invitation, "because," she says, "the queen had shown her so much friendship, that she could not withdraw herself from her protection without appearing ungrateful;" and concludes in these words:—"I shall always pay the greatest deference to the instructions you may give me, and submit to whatsoever your highness shall be pleased to ordain." The letter is without date or signature.

For a year, at least, after the death of her royal father, Elizabeth continued to pursue her studies under the able superintendence of her accomplished step-mother, with whom she lived, either at the dower palace at Chelsea, or the more sequestered shades of Hanworth.

While residing with Queen Katharine Parr, she had her own ladies and officers of State, and a retinue in all respects suitable to her high rank as sister to the reigning sovereign. Her governess, Mrs. Katharine Ashley, to whom she was fondly attached, was married to a relative of the unfortunate queen her mother, Anne Boleyn, and it is to be observed that

Elizabeth, although that mother's name was to her a sealed subject, bestowed to the very end of her life her chief favour and confidence on her maternal kindred.

The learned William Grindal was Elizabeth's tutor till she was placed under the still more distinguished preceptorship of Roger Ascham.

On the death of his friend, William Grindal, Ascham was appointed tutor to the Lady Elizabeth, then about sixteen, with whom he read nearly the whole of Cicero's works, Livy, the orations of Isocrates, the tragedies of Sophocles, and the New Testament in Greek. Some disturbances in Ascham's own family separated him from his royal pupil in 1550.

Sufficient account has been given elsewhere* of the rude and improper conduct of the lord admiral, Sir Thomas Seymour, to the fair young royal student, while under the care of his consort the queen-dowager, at Chelsea, Hanworth, and Seymour Place. The boisterous romping to which the queen was at first a party, was repeated in her absence, and when Mrs. Ashley remonstrated with the admiral on the indecorum of his behaviour to the young princess, and entreated him to desist, he replied with a profane oath, "that he would not, for he meant no harm."

Few girls of fifteen have ever been placed in a situation of greater peril than Elizabeth was at this period of her life, and if she passed through it without incurring the actual stain of guilt, it is certain that she did not escape scandal. The queen-dowager, apparently terrified at the audacious terms of familiarity on which she found her husband endeavouring to establish himself with her royal step-daughter, hastened to prevent further mischief by effecting an immediate separation between them.

The time of Elizabeth's departure from the house and protection of Queen Katharine Parr, was a week after Whitsuntide 1548. She then removed with her governess, Mrs. Katharine Ashley, and the rest of her establishment, to Cheston, and afterwards to Hatfield and Ashridge.

That Katharine Parr spoke with some degree of severity

* See Miss Strickland's *Life of Katharine Parr*.

to Elizabeth, on the levity of her conduct, there can be no doubt, but there is every reason to believe that they continued to write to each other on very friendly and affectionate terms.

Katharine Parr, during her last illness, wished much to see Elizabeth, and left her, in her will, half her jewels, and a rich chain of gold. She had often said to her, "God has given you great qualities, cultivate them always, and labour to improve them, for I believe that you are destined by Heaven to be Queen of England."

One of the admiral's servants, named Edward, came to Cheston, or Cheshunt, where the Lady Elizabeth was then residing with her governess and train, and brought the news of Queen Katharine's death. He told the officers of Elizabeth's household "that his lord was a heavy," that is to say, a sorrowful "man, for the loss of the queen his wife." Elizabeth did not give Seymour much credit for his grief; for when her governess, Mrs. Ashley, advised her, as he had been her friend in the lifetime of the late queen, to write a letter of condolence to comfort him in his sorrow, she replied, "I will not do it, for he needs it not." "Then," said Mrs. Ashley, "if your grace will not, then will I." She did, and showed the letter to her royal pupil, who, without committing herself in any way, tacitly permitted it to be sent. Lady Tyrwhit, soon after, told Mrs. Ashley "that it was the opinion of many that the lord admiral kept the late queen's maidens together to wait on the Lady Elizabeth, whom he intended shortly to marry." Mrs. Ashley also talked with Mr. Tyrwhit about the marriage, who bade her "take heed, for it were but undoing if it were done without the council's leave." At Christmas the report became general that the Lady Elizabeth should marry with the admiral, but Mrs. Ashley sent word to Sir Henry Parker, when he sent his servant to ask her what truth were in this rumour, "that he should in no wise credit it, for it was *ne* thought *ne* meant." Mrs. Ashley, however, by her own account, frequently talked with Elizabeth on the subject, wishing that she and the admiral were married. Elizabeth, who had only completed her fifteenth year two days after the death of Queen Katharine Parr, had no maternal friend to

direct and watch over her—there was not even a married lady of noble birth or alliance in her household—a household comprising upwards of one hundred and twenty persons—so that she was left entirely to her own discretion, and the counsels of her intriguing governess, Mrs. Katharine Ashley, and the unprincipled cofferer, or treasurer of her house, Thomas Parry, in whom, as well as in Mrs. Ashley, she reposed unbounded confidence. These persons were in the interest of the lord admiral, and did everything in their power to further his presumptuous designs on their royal mistress.

Leti, who, from his reference to the Aylesbury MSS., had certainly the best information on the subject, gives Elizabeth credit for acting with singular prudence under these circumstances: he tells us, that very soon after the death of Queen Katharine, the lord admiral presented himself before Elizabeth, clad in all the external panoply of mourning, but having, as she suspected, very little grief in his heart. He came as a wooer to the royal maid, from whom he received no encouragement, but he endeavoured to recommend his cause to her through her female attendants. One of her bedchamber women, of the name of Mountjoye, took the liberty of speaking openly to her youthful mistress in favour of a marriage between her and the admiral, enlarging at the same time on his qualifications in such unguarded language that Elizabeth, after trying in vain to silence her, told her at last, “that she would have her thrust out of her presence if she did not desist.”

There can, however, be little doubt that a powerful impression was made on Elizabeth by the addresses of Seymour, seconded, as they were, by the importunity of her governess, and all who possessed her confidence. The difference of nearly twenty years in their ages was, probably, compensated by the personal graces which had rendered him the Adonis of her father's Court, and she was accustomed to blush when his name was mentioned, and could not conceal her pleasure when she heard him commended. In a word, he was the first, and perhaps the only, man whom Elizabeth loved, and for whom she felt disposed to make a sacrifice. She acknowledged that she would have

married him provided he could have obtained the consent of the council. To have contracted wedlock with him in defiance of that despotic junta, by which the sovereign power of the Crown was then exercised, would have involved them both in ruin ; and even if passion had so far prevailed over Elizabeth's characteristic caution and keen regard to her own interest, Seymour's feelings were not of that romantic nature which would have led him to sacrifice either wealth or ambition on the shrine of love.

The Protector and his council, meantime, kept a jealous watch on the proceedings of the admiral, not only with regard to his clandestine addresses with the Lady Elizabeth, but his daring intrigues to overthrow the established regency, and get the power into his own hands. There was an attempt, on the part of Somerset, to avert the mischief by sending the admiral on a mission to Boulogne ; and the last interview the Princess Elizabeth's confidential servant, Parry, had with him was in his chamber, at the Court, where he was preparing for this unwelcome voyage.

On January 16th, Seymour was arrested on a charge of high treason, having boasted that he had ten thousand men at his command, and suborned Sharrington, the master of the mint at Bristol, to coin a large sum of false money to support him in his wild projects. He was committed to the Tower, and not only his servants, but the principal persons in the household of the Princess Elizabeth were also arrested, and subjected to very strict examination by the council, in order to ascertain the nature of the admiral's connexion with the princess, and how far she was implicated in his intrigues against the Government. In fact, Elizabeth herself seems to have been treated as a prisoner of State, while these momentous investigations were proceeding ; for, though she made earnest supplication to be admitted to the presence of the king her brother, or even to that of the Protector, in order to justify herself, she was detained at her house at Hatfield, under the especial charge of Sir Robert Tyrwhit, who certainly was empowered by the council to put her and her household under restraint.

Very distressing must this crisis have been to a girl in her sixteenth year, who had no maternal friend to counsel and support her, under circumstances that were the more painful because of the previous scandals in which she had been involved, at the time of her separation from her royal step-mother, on account of the free conduct of the admiral.

Sir Robert Tyrwhit first announced to her the alarming tidings that Mrs. Ashley and her husband, with Parry her cofferer, had all been committed to the Tower on her account ; on which, he says, "her grace was marvellously abashed, and did weep, very tenderly, a long time, demanding 'whether they had confessed anything?'" Tyrwhit assured her, "that they had confessed everything, and urged her to do the same." Elizabeth was not to be thus easily out-witted, and Tyrwhit then endeavoured to terrify her by requiring her "to remember her honour, and the peril that might ensue, for she was but a subject"—an innuendo that might have been somewhat alarming to so young a girl, considering her mother, though a queen, had died by the sword of the executioner ; but the lofty spirit of Elizabeth was not to be thus intimidated, and Tyrwhit told Somerset "that he was not able to get anything from her but by gentle persuasion, whereby he began to grow with her in credit," "for I do assure your grace," continues he, "she hath a good wit, and nothing is to be gotten from her but by great policy." She was, however, greatly disturbed when he told her that Parry and Mrs. Ashley had both confessed, and in confirmation showed her the signatures to their depositions ; on which she called Parry "false wretch."

Tyrwhit told her what sort of a woman Mrs. Ashley was, and assured her "that if she would open all things, that all the evil and shame should be ascribed to them, and her youth taken into consideration by his majesty, the Protector, and the whole council." "But in no way," continues he, "will she confess any practice by Mrs. Ashley, or the cofferer concerning my lord admiral ; and yet I do see it in her face that she is guilty, and yet perceive that she will abide more storms ere she will accuse Mrs. Ashley."

On January 28th, Tyrwhit informs the Protector "that he has, in obedience to his letter of the 26th, practised with her grace, by all means and policy, to induce her to confess more than she had already done, in a letter which she had just written to the duke, with her own hand, which contained all that she was willing to admit ;" and Tyrwhit expresses his conviction that a secret pact had been made by the princess, Mrs. Ashley, and Parry, never to confess anything to the crimination of each other ; "and if so," continues he, "it will never be drawn from her grace, unless by the king her brother, or the Protector."

On February 7th, Tyrwhit succeeded in drawing a few more particulars from Elizabeth, which he forwarded to the Duke of Somerset, enclosed in the following note to his grace :—

"I do send all the articles I received from your grace, and also the Lady Elizabeth's confession, withal, which is not so full of matter as I would it were, nor yet so much as I did procure her to ; but in no way will she confess that either Mrs. Ashley or Parry willed her to any practices with my lord admiral, either by message or writing. They all sing one song, and so I think they would not, unless they had set the note before,—February 7th, Hatfield."

IN ELIZABETH'S HAND.

"Kat Ashley told me, 'that after the lord admiral was married to the queen, if he had had his own will he would have had me afore the queen.' Then I asked her 'How she knew that ?' She said, 'she knew it well enough both by himself and others.' The place where she said this I have forgotten, but she spoke to me of him many times."

Then Tyrwhit wrote the rest of the confession, but under the inspection of the princess, as follows :—

"Another time, after the queen was dead, Kat Ashley would have had me to have written a letter to my lord admiral to have comforted him in his sorrow, because he had been my friend in the queen's lifetime, and would think great kindness therein. Then I said, 'I would not, for he needs it not.' Then said Kat Ashley, 'If your grace will not, then will I.' I remember I did see it [viz. *the consolatory letter Elizabeth thought so superfluous to the widower*], but what the effect of it was I do not remember."

"Another time I asked her, 'what news was at London,' and she said, 'The voice went there that my Lord Admiral Seymour should marry me.' I smiled at that, and replied, 'It was but a London news.' One day she said, '*He* that fain would have had you before he married

the queen will come now to woo you.' I answered her, 'Though peradventure he himself would have me, yet I think the [privy] council will not consent, but I think by what you said if *he* had his own will he would have had me.' I thought there was no let [hindrance] on his part, but only on that of the council. Howbeit, she said another time, 'that she did not wish me to have him, because she who had him was so unfortunate.'"

Elizabeth then informs the duke that Parry asked her, "if the council consented, whether she would have the lord admiral or no." "I asked him," pursues she, "'what he meant by that question, and who bade him ask me?' He replied, 'No one, but he gathered by questions asked by the lord admiral before, that *he* meant some such thing.' I told him it was but his foolish gathering." She says, Parry brought a message from the lord admiral, advising her, "first to get her patents sealed and sure, and then he would apply to the council for leave to marry her." Likewise that the lord admiral wished her to reside at Ashridge, because it was in his way, when he went into the country, to call and see her. Elizabeth signed this confession with her own hand, and very blandly concludes the paper with an assurance to Somerset "that if she remembered any more she would be sure to forward the items to him."

In one of Tyrwhit's letters to Somerset, he says, "that master Beverly and himself have been examining the cofferer's accounts, which they find very incorrect, and the books so "*indiscreetly*" kept, that he appears little fit for his office; that her grace's expenses are at present more than she can afford, and therefore she must perforce make retrenchments. She was desirous that the Protector should not appoint any one to be her cofferer till she had spoken to him herself, for she thought an officer of less importance would serve for that department, and save in her purse a hundred pounds a year."

This proved to be only an excuse, on the part of the young lady, to keep the office open for Parry, whom she took the first opportunity of reinstating in his post, although she had been given full proof of his defalcations; and so far was she from resenting the nature of his disclosures, with regard to the improper confidence that had been reposed in him by her

tattling governess, that she afterwards, on her accession to the throne, appointed him the comptroller of her royal household, and continued her preferment to him and his daughter to the end of their lives,—conduct which naturally induces a suspicion that secrets of greater moment had been confided to him—secrets that probably would have touched not only the maiden fame of his royal mistress, but placed her life in jeopardy, and that he had preserved these inviolate. The same may be supposed with respect to Mrs. Ashley, to whom Elizabeth clung with unshaken tenacity through every storm, even when the council dismissed her from her office, and addressed a stern note to her grace the Lady Elizabeth, apprising her that they had, in consequence of the misconduct of Mrs. Katharine Ashley, removed her from her post, and appointed the Lady Tyrwhit to take her place as governess to her grace, and requiring her to receive her as such.

The disdainful manner in which the young lioness of the Tudor-Plantagenet line received the new duenna, who had been contumeliously put in authority over her by her royal brother's council, is best related in the words of Sir Robert Tyrwhit himself, who, in his two-fold capacity of spy and jailer, seems to have peculiar satisfaction in telling tales of the defenceless orphan of Anne Boleyn to the powerful brother of her murdered mother's rival, Jane Seymour. "Pleaseth your grace to be advertised," he writes, "that after my wife's repair hither, she declared to the Lady Elizabeth's grace, that she was called before your grace and the council, and had a rebuke, that she had not taken upon her the office to see her well governed in the lieu of Mrs. Ashley." This reproof to Lady Tyrwhit must have had reference to the time when all the parties concerned were living under the roof of Queen Katharine Parr, whose lady-in-waiting Lady Tyrwhit was.

The Lady Elizabeth replied, "that Mrs. Ashley was *her* mistress, and that she had not so demeaned herself that the council should now need to put any more mistresses unto her." "Whereunto," pursues Tyrwhit, "my wife answered, 'seeing she did allow Mrs. Ashley to be her mistress, she need not to

be ashamed to have any honest woman to be in that place.' She took the matter so heavily that she wept all that night, and loured all the next day till she received your letter; and then she sent for me, and asked me 'whether she were best to write to you again or not.' I said, 'if she would follow the effect of your letter (meaning if she would comply with the injunctions contained in it) I thought it best that she should write, but in the end of the matter, I perceived that she was very loth to have a governor, and to avoid the same, she said, 'that the world would note her to be a great offender, having so hastily a governor appointed over her,' and all is no more than that she fully hopes to recover her old mistress again. The love she yet beareth her is to be wondered at. I told her [Elizabeth], that if she would consider her honour, and the sequel thereof, she would, considering her years, make suit to your grace to have one, rather than be without one a single hour."

"She cannot digest such advice in no way," continues Sir Robert, drily; "but if I should say my fantasy, it were more meet she should have two than one." He then complains, that although he favoured her grace with his advice as to the manner in which she should frame her reply to Somerset, she would in no wise follow it, "but writ her own fantasy."

The following is the letter which Elizabeth addressed to Somerset, instead of that which his creature, Tyrwhit, had endeavoured to beguile her into writing. It is marked with all the caution that characterized her diplomatic correspondence, after the lessons of worldcraft, in which she finally became an adept, were grown familiar to her. She, however, very properly assumes the tone of an injured person with regard to the scandalous reports that were in circulation against her, and demands that he and the council should take the requisite steps for putting a stop to those injurious rumours :—

LETTER FROM THE LADY ELIZABETH TO THE PROTECTOR
SOMERSET.

"MY LORD,

"Having received your lordship's letters, I perceive in them your goodwill towards me, because you declare to me plainly your

mind in this thing, and again for that you would not wish that I should do anything that should not seem good unto the council, for the which thing I give you most hearty thanks. And whereas, I do understand, that you do take in evil part the letters that I did write unto your lordship, I am very sorry that you should take them so, for my mind was to declare unto you plainly, as I thought, in that thing which I did, also the more willingly, because (as I write to you) you desired me to be plain with you in all things. And as concerning that point that you write, that I seem to stand in mine own wit, in being so well assured of mine own self, I did assure me of myself, no more than I trust the truth shall try; and to say that which I know of myself I did not think should have displeased the council or your grace. And, surely, the cause why that I was sorry that there should be any such about me, was because that I thought the people will say that I deserved, through my lewd demeanour, to have such a one, and not that I mislike anything that your lordship, or the council, shall think good, for I know that you and the council are charged with me, or that I take upon me to rule myself, for I know that they are most deceived that trusteth most in themselves, wherefore I trust you shall never find that fault in me, to the which thing I do not see that your grace has made any direct answer at this time, and seeing they make so evil reports already shall be but an increasing of these evil tongues. Howbeit, you did write 'that if I would bring forth any that had reported it, you and the council would see it redressed,' which thing, though I can easily do it, I would be loth to do, because it is mine own cause; and, again, that it should be but abridging of an evil name of me that am glad to punish them, and so get the evil will of the people, which thing I would be loth to have. But if it might seem good to your lordship, and the rest of the council, to send forth a proclamation into the countries that they refrain their tongues, declaring how the tales be but lies, it should make both the people think that you and the council have great regard that no such rumours should be spread of any of the king's majesty's sisters, (as I am, though unworthy,) and also that I should think myself to receive such friendship at your hands as you have promised me, although your lordship hath showed me great already. Howbeit, I am ashamed to ask it any more, because I see you are not so well minded thereunto. And as concerning that you say that I give folks occasion to think, in refusing the good to uphold the evil, I am not of so simple understanding, nor I would that your grace should have so evil an opinion of me that I have so little respect of my own honesty, that I would maintain it if I had sufficient promise of the same, and so your grace shall prove me when it comes to the point. And thus I bid you farewell, desiring God always to assist you in all your affairs. Written in haste. From Hatfelde, this 21st of February.

"Your assured friend, to my little power,

"ELIZABETH."

[Superscribed.—"To my very good lord, my Lord Protector."]

The council had offered to punish any one whom Elizabeth could point out as the author of the injurious rumours against

her character, and her observation in her letter to Somerset, in reply to this offer, "that she should but gain an evil name as if she were glad to punish, and thus incur the ill-will of the people, which she should be loth to have," is indicative of the profound policy, which throughout life, enabled this great queen to win and retain the affections of the men of England. Popularity was a leading object with Elizabeth from her childhood to the grave, and well had nature fitted her to play her part with *éclat* in the splendid drama of royalty.

On March 4th, 1549, the Bill of attainder against Thomas Seymour Baron Sudley, Lord Admiral of England, was read for the third time in the House of Lords. On March 20th, he was brought to the block : he had employed the last evening of his life in writing letters to Elizabeth and her sister, with the point of an aglet, which he plucked from his hose, being denied the use of pen and ink. These letters, which he concealed within the sole of a velvet shoe, were discovered by the emissaries of the council, and opened. No copies of these interesting documents have apparently been preserved, but Bishop Latimer, in his sermon in justification of the execution of the unhappy writer, described them to be "of a wicked and dangerous nature, tending to excite the jealousy of the king's sisters against the Protector Somerset, as their great enemy."

When Elizabeth was informed of the execution of the admiral, she had the presence of mind to disappoint the malignant curiosity of the official spies, who were watching to report every symptom of emotion she might betray on that occasion, and merely said,

"This day died a man, with much wit, and very little judgment."

Although this extraordinary instance of self-command might, by some, be regarded as a mark of apathy in so young a woman, there can be no doubt that Elizabeth had been entangled in the snares of a deep and enduring passion for Scymour—passion that had rendered her regardless of every consideration of pride, caution, and ambition, and forgetful of the obstacle which nature itself had opposed to a union between the daughter of

Anne Boleyn and a brother of Jane Seymour. That Elizabeth continued to cherish the memory of this unsuitable lover with tenderness—not only after she had been deprived of him by the axe of the executioner, but for long years afterwards—may be inferred from the favour which she always bestowed on his faithful follower, Sir John Harrington the elder, and the fact that when she was actually the sovereign of England, and had rejected the addresses of many of the princes of Europe, Harrington ventured to present her with a portrait of his deceased lord, the admiral, and a descriptive sonnet.*

The gift was accepted, and no reproof addressed to the donor.

CHAPTER II

Elizabeth's scholastic pursuits—Ascham—She goes to Court—Her simplicity of attire—Her conformity to the Reformation—Prevented from seeing King Edward—Her letter to him—Her household at Hatfield—Privy purse expenses—Her letter to the council—Death of Edward VI.—Elizabeth escapes Northumberland's snares—Prudent answer—Meets her sister—Enters London with Mary—Admiration of the people—Popularity with the Protestants—Queen's jealousy—Elizabeth refuses the mass—Queen Mary's displeasure—Elizabeth dissembles and conforms—Given precedency next the queen at the coronation—Intrigues of the French ambassador—Plots in favour of Elizabeth and Courtenay—Increasing coolness of the queen—Elizabeth forbidden to quit the palace—Or to receive visits—Matrimonial proposals—Offered an asylum in France—Courtenay betrays the plot—Wyat's rebellion—Elizabeth implicated therein—Queen Mary sends for her—Her excuses—Mandate for her appearance—Her journey from Hatfield to Court—Entrance into London—Queen refuses to see her—Her death desired by the council—Gardiner's accusations against her—Her household discharged—Her distress—She is carried by water to the Tower—Her disconsolate condition.

THE disastrous termination of Elizabeth's first love affair appears to have had the salutary effect of inclining her to habits of a studious and reflective character. She was for a time under

* See Appendix, Note B., Elizabeth and Sir Thomas Seymour.

a cloud, and during the profound retirement in which she was doomed to remain for at least a year after the execution of the lord admiral, the energies of her active mind found employment and solace in the pursuits of learning. She assumed a grave and sedate demeanour, withal, and bestowed much attention on theology, which the polemic spirit of the times rendered a subject of powerful interest.

Not in vain did she labour to efface the memory of her early indiscretion, by establishing a reputation for learning and piety. The learned Roger Ascham, under whom she perfected herself in the study of the classics, in his letters to Sturmius, the rector of the Protestant university, at Strasburg, is enthusiastic in his encomiums on his royal pupil, of whose scholastic attainments he is justly proud. The commendations of this great scholar, had probably some share in restoring her to the favour of the learned young king, her brother, whose early affection for the dearly loved companion of his infancy, appears to have revived after a time, and though the jealousy of the selfish statesmen who held him in thrall, prevented the princely boy from gratifying his yearnings for her presence, he wrote to her to send him her portrait.

On March 17th, 1551, she emerged from the profound retirement in which she had remained since her disgrace in 1549, and came in state to visit the king her brother. She rode on horseback through London to St. James's Palace, attended by a great company of lords, knights, and gentlemen, and after her about two hundred ladies. On the 19th, she came from St. James's, through the park, to the Court. The way from the park gate to the Court was spread with fine sand. She was attended by a very honourable confluence of noble and worshipful persons of both sexes, and was received with much ceremony at the Court gate.

That wily politician, the Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, had considered Elizabeth, young and neglected as she was, of sufficient political importance to send her a duplicate of the curious letter addressed by the new council jointly to her and her sister, the Lady Mary, in which a statement

is given of the asserted misdemeanours of Somerset, and their proceedings against him. The council were now at issue with Mary on the grounds of her adherence to the ancient doctrines, and as a conference had been appointed between her and her opponents on March 18th, it might be to divert popular attention from her and her cause, that the younger and fairer sister of the sovereign was permitted to make her public entrance into London, on the preceding day, and that she was treated with so many marks of unwonted respect. Thus we see Mary makes her public entry on the 18th, with her train all decorated with black rosaries and crosses, and, on the 19th, Elizabeth is again shown to the people, as if to obliterate any interest that might have been excited by the appearance of the elder princess. The love of Edward VI. for Elizabeth was so very great, according to Camden, that he never spoke of her by any other title than his "dearest sister," or "his sweet sister Temperance." Elizabeth at that period affected extreme simplicity of dress, in conformity to the mode, which the rigid rules of the Calvinistic Church of Geneva was rendering general, among the stricter portion of those noble ladies who professed the doctrines of the Reformation.

The plainness and modesty of her costume was particularly noticed during the splendid festivities that took place on the occasion of the visit of the Queen-dowager of Scotland, Mary of Lorraine, to the Court of Edward VI., in October, 1551. The advent of the beautiful regent of the sister kingdom, and her French ladies-of-honour, fresh from the gay and gallant Louvre, produced no slight excitement among the noble belles of King Edward's Court, and it seems that a sudden and complete revolution in dress took place, in consequence of the new fashions, that were then imported, by Queen Mary and her brilliant *cortège*; "so that all the ladies went with their hair frounsed, curled, and double curled, except the Princess Elizabeth, who altered nothing," says Aylmer, "but kept her old maiden shamefacedness."

At a later period of life, Elizabeth made up, in the exuberance of her ornaments, and the fantastic extravagance of

her dress, for the simplicity of her attire when in the bloom of sweet seventeen. The Elizabeth of seventeen had, however, a purpose to answer and a part to play, neither of which were compatible with the indulgence of her natural vanity, and that inordinate love of dress which the popular preachers of her brother's Court were perpetually denouncing from the pulpit. Her purpose was the re-establishment of that fair fame which had been sullied by the cruel implication of her name, by the Protector Somerset and his creatures, in the proceedings against the lord admiral; and in this she had, by the circumspection of her conduct, the unremitting manner in which she had, since that mortifying period, devoted herself to the pursuits of learning and theology, so fully succeeded, that she was now regarded as a pattern for all the youthful ladies of the Court.

The part which she was ambitious of performing was that of the heroine of the reformed party in England, even as her sister Mary was of the Catholic portion of the people. That Elizabeth was already so considered, and that the royal sisters were early placed in incipient rivalry to each other, by the respective partisans of the warring creeds which divided the land, may be gathered from the observations of their youthful cousin, Lady Jane Grey, when urged to wear the costly dress that had been presented to her by Mary—"Nay, that were a shame, to follow my Lady Mary, who leaveth God's word, and leave my Lady Elizabeth, who followeth God's word."

Elizabeth wisely took no visible part in the struggle between the Dudley and Seymour factions, though there is reason to believe that Somerset tried to enlist her on his side. If we may credit Leti, he sent a piteous supplication to her from the Tower, imploring her to go to the king, and exert her powerful influence to obtain his pardon; and she wrote to him in reply, "that being so young a woman, she had no power to do anything in his behalf," and assured him "that the king was surrounded by those who took good care to prevent her from approaching too near the Court, and she had no more opportunity of access to his majesty than himself."

It was no part of Northumberland's policy to allow either of the sisters of the young king to enjoy the opportunity of personal intercourse with him, and least of all, Elizabeth, whom, from the tender friendship that had ever united them, and, more than all, the conformity of her profession with Edward's religious opinions, he might naturally have been desirous of appointing as his successor, when his brief term of royalty was drawing to a close. That Elizabeth made an attempt to visit her royal brother in his sickness (at what period is uncertain), and that she was circumvented in her intention, and intercepted on her approach to the metropolis, by the agents of the faction that had possession of his person, she herself informs him in the following letter, in which she evinces a truly sisterly solicitude for his health.

LETTER FROM THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH TO KING EDWARD VI.

"Like as a shipman in stormy weather plucks down the sails tarrying for better winds, so did I, most noble king, in my unfortunate chance on Thursday, pluck down the high sails of my joy and comfort, and do trust one day that, as troublesome waves have repulsed me backward, so a gentle wind will bring me forward to my haven. Two chief occasions moved me much and grieved me greatly,—the one, for that I doubted your majesty's health—the other, because for all my long tarrying I went without that I came for. Of the first, I am relieved in a part, both that I understood of your health, and also that your majesty's lodging is not far from my lord marquis' chamber. Of my other grief I am not eased, but the best is, that whatsoever other folks will suspect, I intend not to fear your grace's good will, which as I know that I never deserved to forfeit, so I trust will still stick by me. For if your grace's advice that I should return (whose will is a commandment) had not been, I would not have made the half of my way the end of my journey. And thus, as one desirous to hear of your majesty's health, though unfortunate to see it, I shall pray God for ever to preserve you.—From Hatfield, this present Saturday.

"Your majesty's humble sister to commandment,

"ELIZABETH.

"To the king's most excellent majesty."

The same power that was employed to prevent the visit of Elizabeth to her sick, perhaps dying, brother, probably deprived him of the satisfaction of receiving the letter which informed him that such had been her intention. It was the interest of those unprincipled statesmen to instil feelings of bitterness into

the heart of the poor young king, against those, to whom the fond ties of natural affection had once so strongly united him. The tenor of Edward VI.'s will, and the testimony of the persons who were about him at the time of his death, prove, that he was at last no less estranged from Elizabeth, his "sweetest sister Temperance," as he was formerly wont to call her, than from Mary, whose recusancy had been urged against her as a reasonable ground for exclusion from the throne. Both were alike excluded from their natural places in the succession, and deprived of the benefit of their father's nomination in the Act for settling the royal succession in the year 1544, and subsequently in his will.

Latimer preached in favour of the exclusion of Elizabeth as well as Mary, declaring that it was better that God should take away the Ladies Mary and Elizabeth, than that, by marrying foreign princes, they should endanger the existence of the Reformed Church. Ridley set forth the same doctrine, although it was well known that Elizabeth had rejected the offer of one foreign prince, and had evinced a disinclination to marriage altogether. Nothing, therefore, could be more unfair than rejecting her, for fear of a contingency that never might, and in fact never did, happen.

The name of conscience was, however, the watchword under which Northumberland and his accomplices had carried their point with their pious young sovereign, when they induced him to set aside the rightful heirs, and bequeath the crown to Lady Jane Grey.

On the morning of July 6th, Edward expired at Greenwich, but his death was kept secret for the purpose of securing the persons of his sisters, to both of whom deceitful letters were written in his name, by order of Northumberland, requiring them to hasten to London to visit him in his sickness. Elizabeth, more wary than her sister, or better informed of what was in agitation by some secret friend at Court, supposed to be Cecil, instead of obeying the guileful summons, remained quietly at Hatfield to watch the event. This was presently certified to her by the arrival of commissioners from the Duke

of Northumberland, who, after announcing the death of the young king, and his appointment of Lady Jane Grey for his successor, offered her a large sum of money and a considerable grant of lands, as the price of her acquiescence, if she would make a voluntary cession of her own rights in the succession, which she was in no condition to assert. Elizabeth with equal wisdom and courage, replied, "that they must first make their agreement with her elder sister, during whose lifetime she had no claim or title to resign." Leti assures us, that she also wrote a letter of indignant expostulation to Northumberland, on the wrong that had been done to her sister and herself, by proclaiming his daughter-in-law queen. A fit of sickness, real, or, as some have insinuated, feigned, preserved Elizabeth from the peril of taking any share in the contest for the crown. Her defenceless position, and her proximity to the metropolis, placed her in a critical predicament, and if by feigning illness she avoided being conducted to the Tower by Northumberland's partisans, she acted as a wise woman, seeing that discretion is the better part of valour. But, sick or well, she preserved her integrity, and as soon as the news of her sister's successes reached her, she forgot her indisposition and hastened to give public demonstrations of her loyalty and affection to her person, by going in state to meet and welcome her, on her triumphant progress to the metropolis. The royal sisters met at Wanstead, where Elizabeth and her train paid their first homage to Queen Mary, who received them very graciously, and kissed every lady presented by Elizabeth.

On the occasion of Mary's triumphant entrance into London, the royal sisters rode side by side, in the grand equestrian procession. The youthful charms of Elizabeth, then in her twentieth year, the majestic grace of her tall and finely proportioned figure, attracted every eye, and formed a contrast disadvantageous to Mary, who was nearly double her age, small in person, and faded prematurely by early sorrow, sickness, and anxiety. The pride and reserve of Mary's character, would not allow her to condescend to the practice of any of those arts of courting popularity, in which Elizabeth, who rendered

everything subservient to the master-passion of her soul, ambition, was a practised adept. In every look, word, and action, Elizabeth studied effect, and on this occasion it was noticed that she took every opportunity of displaying the beauty of her hand, of which she was not a little vain.

Within one little month after their public entrance into London, the evil spirits of the times had succeeded in re-kindling the sparks of jealousy between the Catholic queen and the Protestant heiress of the throne. The refusal of Elizabeth to attend mass, while it excited the most lively feelings of admiration for her sincerity and courage among the Protestants, gave great offence to the queen and her council, and the princess was sternly enjoined to conform to the Catholic rites. Elizabeth was resolute in her refusal; she even declined, under pretext of indisposition, being present at the ceremonial of making her kinsman Courtenay an earl. This was construed into disrespect for the queen. Some of the more head-long zealots, by whom Mary was surrounded, recommended that she should be put under arrest. Mary refused to consent to a measure at once unpopular and unjustifiable, but endeavoured, by alternate threats, persuasions, and promises, to prevail on her sister to accompany her to the Chapel Royal. The progress of the contest between the queen and her sister, on this case of conscience, is thus detailed by the French ambassador, Noailles, in a letter dated September 8th:

“Elizabeth will not hear mass, nor accompany her sister to the chapel, whatever remonstrance either the queen or the lords on her side have been able to make to her on this subject. It is feared, that she is counselled in her obstinacy by some of the magnates, who are disposed to stir up fresh troubles. Last Saturday and Sunday,” continues he, “the queen caused her to be preached to, and entreated by all the great men of the council, one after the other, but their importunity only elicited from her, at last, a very rude reply.” The queen was greatly annoyed by the firmness of Elizabeth, which promised to prove a serious obstacle to the restoration of papacy in England. The faction that had attempted to sacrifice the

rights of both the daughters of Henry VIII. by proclaiming Lady Jane Grey queen, gathered hopes from the dissension between the royal sisters. Elizabeth, however, who had no intention of unsettling the recently established Government of the sickly sovereign to whom she was heiress presumptive, when she found that it was suspected that her nonconformity proceeded from disaffection, demanded an audience with Queen Mary, and throwing herself on her knees before her, she told her, weeping at the same time, "that she saw plainly how little affection her majesty appeared to have for her, and that she knew she had done nothing to offend her, except in the article of religion, in which she was excusable, having been brought up in the creed she at present professed, without having ever heard any doctor who could have instructed her in the other." She entreated the queen, therefore, to let her have some books, explanatory of doctrine contrary to that set forth in the Protestant books she had hitherto read, and she would commence a course of study, from works composed expressly in defence of the Catholic creed, which, perhaps, might lead her to adopt other sentiments. She also requested to have some learned man appointed for her instructor.

The queen received these overtures in a conciliatory spirit, and Elizabeth appeared with her at the celebration of mass, on September 8th, a festival by which the Church of Rome commemorates the nativity of the Blessed Virgin. Griffet affirms, that Elizabeth did this with a bad grace, and gave evident tokens of repugnance, but she voluntarily wrote to the Emperor Charles V., requesting him to send a cross, chalices, and other ecclesiastical ornaments for a chapel, "which she intended," she said, "to open in her own house." By these condescensions to expediency, Elizabeth succeeded for a time in maintaining her footing at Court, and securing her proper place in the approaching ceremonial of the coronation, as next in rank to her sister the queen. Her public recognition as the heiress presumptive to the throne, was of the greater moment to Elizabeth, because, by the Act which passed immediately after the meeting of Mary's first Parliament, confirming the marriage

of Henry VIII. and Katharine of Arragon, and establishing the legitimacy of the queen, the subsequent marriage of Henry with Anne Boleyn was rendered null and void, and the birth of Elizabeth illegitimate in point of law, although, from motives of delicacy, as well as sound policy, it was not declared so. Elizabeth was the darling of the people, and as long as her reversionary claims to the regal succession were recognised by the reigning sovereign, she stood beside the throne, as a check to the plots of the aspiring house of Suffolk, on the one hand, and the designs of the French party on the other. Lady Jane Grey was still living and unforgotten, and Henry II. of France treated his daughter-in-law, the young Queen of Scots, as the rightful sovereign of England, on the plea that *neither* of the daughters of Henry VIII. were legitimate. Their father had stigmatized the birth of both Mary and Elizabeth, and the subservient Parliament of June, 1536, had, in obedience to his unjust intention of preferring any future daughters that might be born to him by Jane Seymour or her successors, to the issue of Katharine of Arragon and Anne Boleyn, formally declared the royal sisters illegitimate, and incapable of succeeding to the throne.

The Act for settling the succession in 1545, and the will of Henry VIII., had indeed taken away the latter clause, but the declaration of illegitimacy remained unrepealed, and had been further insisted upon in the will of the late King Edward VI., by the exclusion of both princesses, in favour of the granddaughter of the youngest sister of Henry VIII. The experiment of placing a juvenile scion, from a collateral branch of the royal family, on the throne, had been displeasing to the nation in general; not only Catholics, but Protestants had united in opposing so flagrant a violation of the old established laws of the regal succession in England. The miseries caused by the Wars of the Roses, had proved a salutary lesson on the danger of permitting a temporary alienation of the Crown from the direct line of primogeniture; and a mighty majority of the people had vested the sovereignty in the person of Mary Tudor, according to the letter of her father's will, the conditions of which she never violated with regard to Elizabeth's

reversionary claim to the succession. So far, the interests of Elizabeth were united with those of her sister, but when the Act which established the legitimacy of the queen passed, she and her friends took umbrage, because it tacitly implied the fact that she was not born in lawful wedlock.

If Elizabeth had acted with the profound policy which marked her subsequent conduct, she would not have called attention to this delicate point, by evincing her displeasure, but her pride was piqued, and she demanded permission to withdraw from Court. It was refused, and a temporary estrangement took place between her and the queen. Noailles, the French ambassador, whose business it was to pave the way for the succession of the young Queen of Scots to the throne of England by the destruction of the present heiress presumptive, fomented the differences between the royal sisters with fiend-like subtlety and satisfaction.

The Protestant party, alarmed at the zeal of Queen Mary for the re-establishment of the old Catholic institutions, and detesting the idea of her Spanish marriage, were easily excited to enter into any project for averting the evils they foresaw. A plot was devised for raising the standard of revolt against Queen Mary's Government, in the joint names of the Princess Elizabeth and Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire, to whom they proposed to unite her in marriage. That Courtenay, who had been piqued at Mary's declining to accept him for her husband, entered into a confederacy, which promised him a younger and more attractive royal bride, with the prospect of a crown for her dowry, there is no doubt; though the romantic tales in which some modern historians have indulged, touching his passion for Elizabeth, are somewhat apocryphal. The assertion that he refused the proffered hand of Mary, on account of his disinterested preference for Elizabeth, is decidedly untrue. It was not till convinced of the hopelessness of his suit to the queen, that he allowed himself to be implicated in a political engagement to marry Elizabeth, who, if consenting to the scheme, appears to have been wholly a passive agent, cautiously avoiding any personal participation in the confederacy, till she saw how it was likely to end. It is therefore difficult to say how far her

heart was touched by the external graces of her handsome but weak-minded kinsman.

The difficulties of her position at this crisis were extreme ; distrusted by the queen, watched and calumniated by the Spanish ambassador, Renaud, assailed by the misjudging enthusiasm of the Protestant party with spiritual adulation, and entreated to stand forth as the heroine of their cause, and tempted by the persuasions and treacherous promises of the subtle Noailles, it required caution and strength of mind seldom to be found in a girl of twenty, not to fall into some of the snares which so thickly beset her path. Noailles made his house a rendezvous for the discontented Protestants and the disaffected of every description. Midnight conferences were held there, at which Courtenay was a prominent person, though the pusillanimity of his character rendered it difficult to stir him up to anything like open enterprise. Noailles informed his Court "that though Elizabeth and Courtenay were proper instruments for the purpose of exciting a popular rising, Courtenay was so timorous that he would suffer himself to be taken before he would act." The event proved the accuracy of this judgment. By the dint, however, of great nursing, the infant conspiracy began to assume a more decided form, and as Elizabeth could not be induced to unite herself openly with the confederates, Noailles affirms "that they intended to surprise and carry her away, to marry her to Courtenay, and conduct them into Devonshire and Cornwall, where Courtenay had powerful friends." They imagined that a general rising would take place in their favour, in the west of England, with a simultaneous revolt of the Suffolk faction in the east and other parts, where they greatly miscalculated the popular feeling against the queen.

Elizabeth, meantime, perceiving the perils that beset her, on the one hand, from the folly of her injudicious friends, and, on the other, from the malignity of her foes, and alarmed at the altered manner of the queen towards her, reiterated her entreaties to be permitted to retire to one of her houses in the country. The leave was granted, and the day for her departure actually fixed, but the representations of the Spanish minister,

“that she was deeply engaged in plots against her majesty’s Government, and that she only wished to escape from observation by withdrawing herself into the country, in order to have the better opportunity of carrying on her intrigues with the disaffected,” caused Queen Mary to forbid her to quit the palace. So much incensed was the queen, at the reports that were daily brought to her, of the disloyalty of Elizabeth, that she would not admit her to her presence, and inflicted upon her the severe mortification of allowing the Countess of Lennox and the Duchess of Suffolk to take precedency of her. Elizabeth then absented herself from the Chapel Royal, and confined herself to her own chamber ; on which, the queen forbade any of her ladies to visit her there without especial permission.

So considerable, however, was the influence Elizabeth had already acquired among the female aristocracy of England, and so powerful was the sympathy excited for her at this period, that, in defiance of the royal mandate, all the young gentlewomen of the Court visited her daily, and all day long in her chamber, and united in manifesting the most ardent affection for her. Elizabeth received these flattering tokens of regard with answering warmth, in the vain hope that the strength of her party would place her on a more independent footing, but of course it only rendered her case worse, by exciting jealousy and provoking anger. She was sedulously watched by the council ; spies in her own household made almost hourly reports of all her movements, and every visit she received. By one of these traitors information was conveyed to Mary’s ministers that a refugee French preacher had secret interviews with her ; on which the Spanish ambassador advised, that she should be sent to the Tower. Renaud also charged Noailles, the French ambassador, with holding private nocturnal conferences with the princess in her own chamber ; this Noailles angrily denied, and a violent altercation took place between the two diplomatists on the subject. Two of the queen’s ministers, Paget and Arundel, then waited on Elizabeth, and informed her of the accusation. She found no difficulty in disproving a charge of which she was really innocent, and with some emotion expressed

her gratitude "for not having been condemned unheard," and entreated them, "never to give credit to the calumnies that might hereafter be circulated against her, without allowing her an opportunity of justifying herself."

The queen, after this explanation, as a pledge of her reconciliation with Elizabeth, presented her with a double set of large and valuable pearls, and having granted her permission to retire into the country, dismissed her with tokens of respect and affection.

It was in the beginning of December, that Elizabeth obtained the long delayed leave from her royal sister to retire to her own house at Ashridge, in Buckinghamshire ; but even there a jealous watch was kept on all her movements, and those of her servants. Never had captive bird panted more to burst from the thralldom of a cage, than she to escape from the painful restraints and restless intrigues of the Court, where she was one day threatened with prison, and the next flattered with the prospect of a crown ; but the repose for which she sighed was far remote. Instead of enjoying the peaceful pursuits of learning, or sylvan sports, in her country abode, she was harassed with a matrimonial proposal, which had been suggested to Mary by the Spanish Cabinet, in behalf of the Prince of Piedmont ; it not being considered expedient for the queen to solemnise her unpopular nuptials with Philip of Spain, till Elizabeth was wedded to a foreign husband.

Elizabeth resolutely refused to listen to the pretensions of the Prince of Piedmont, and she also declined the overtures that were privately renewed to her by the King of Denmark, in favour of his son, whom she had refused during her brother's reign. In all the trials, mortifications, and perplexities which surrounded her, she kept her eye steadily fixed on the bright reversion of the crown of England, and positively refused to marry out of the realm, even when the only alternative appeared to be a foreign husband or a scaffold.

On January 21st, 1553-4, Gardiner drew from the weak or treacherous Courtenay the secrets of the confederacy of which he was to have been the leader and the hero. The conspirators on the following day learned that they had been betrayed, and found themselves under the fatal necessity of

anticipating their plans by taking up arms. Wyatt unfurled the standard of revolt on January 25th, and the queen sent her royal mandate to Elizabeth on the 26th, enjoining her immediate return to Court, "where," however, she assured her, "she would be heartily welcome." Elizabeth mistrusted the invitation, and took to her bed; sending a verbal message to the queen "that she was too ill at present to travel, that as soon as she was able she would come, and prayed her majesty's forbearance for a few days."

After the lapse of several days, the officers of Elizabeth's household addressed a letter to her majesty's council, to explain "that increased indisposition, on the part of their mistress, was the sole cause that prevented her from repairing to the queen's highness, and though they continued in hope of her amendment, they saw no appearance of it, and therefore they considered it their duty, considering the perilous attempts of the rebels, to apprise their lordships of her state."

Mary received this excuse, and waited for the coming of Elizabeth till February 10th. During that eventful fortnight a formidable insurrection had broken out, of which the ostensible object was the dethronement of the queen, and the elevation of Elizabeth to the regal office. The French and Venetian ambassadors had both intrigued with the disaffected, and supplied them with money and arms. Mary had been attacked in her own palace by Wyatt's army of insurgents; she had quelled the insurrection, and proceeded to measures of great severity, to deter her factious subjects from further attempts to disturb the public peace. Terror was stricken into every heart when it was known that a warrant was issued for the immediate execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband. Wyatt, and others of the confederates, with the view of escaping the penalty of their own rash attempts, basely denounced Elizabeth and Courtenay as the excitors of the treasonable designs that had deluged the metropolis with blood, and shaken the throne of Mary. Elizabeth had fortified her house meantime, and introduced an armed force within her walls, probably for a defence against the partisans of Lady Jane Grey, but of course, her

enemies and the Spanish party insisted that it was intended as a defiance to the royal authority. The queen, who had every reason to distrust her loyalty, then despatched Lord William Howard, Sir Edward Hastings, and Sir Thomas Cornwallis, to bring her to Court. With these gentlemen she sent her own physicians, Dr. Owen and Dr. Wendy, to ascertain whether Elizabeth were really able to bear the journey.

It was not till Monday morning, the 12th, that they proceeded to remove her. It was the day appointed for the execution of the Lady Jane Grey and Lord Guildford Dudley, and even the strong mind and lion-like spirit of Elizabeth must have quailed, at the appalling nature of her own summons to the metropolis, and the idea of commencing her journey in so ominous an hour. Thrice she was near fainting as she was led between two of her escort to the royal litter, which the queen had sent for her accommodation. That she was suffering severely, both in mind and body, at this terrific crisis, there can be no doubt, but when the moment came for her public entrance into London as a prisoner of State, her firmness returned, and the spirit of the royal heroine triumphed over the weakness of the invalid and the terrors of the woman. Her deportment on that occasion is thus finely described by an eye-witness who thirsted for her blood—Simon Renaud, the Spanish ambassador, in a letter to her great enemy, the Emperor Charles V., dated February 24th, 1554.

"The Lady Elizabeth," says he, "arrived here yesterday, dressed all in white, surrounded with a great company of the queen's people, besides her own attendants. She made them uncover the litter in which she rode, that she might be seen by the people. Her countenance was pale and stern, her mien proud, lofty, and disdainful, by which she endeavoured to conceal her trouble."

The cavalcade passed through Smithfield and Fleet Street to Whitehall, between four and five in the afternoon, and entered the palace through the garden. Whatever might be her inward alarm, Elizabeth assumed an intrepid bearing. She boldly protested her innocence, and demanded an interview with her sister the queen, on the plea of Mary's previous promise never

to condemn her unheard. Mary declined seeing her, and she was conducted to a quarter of the palace at Westminster, from which neither she nor her servants could go without passing through the guards. Six ladies, two gentlemen, and four servants of her own retinue, were permitted to remain in attendance on her person, the rest of her train were sent into the city of London and lodged there. It was on the fidelity and moral courage of these persons, that the life of Elizabeth depended; and it is certain that several of them were implicated in the conspiracy. Courtenay, her affianced husband, had been arrested on February 12th, in the house of the Earl of Sussex, and was safely lodged in the Bell Tower, and subjected to daily examinations. He had previously given tokens of weakness and want of principle sufficient to fill every one with whom he had been politically connected with apprehension. Yet he seems to have acted honourably with regard to Elizabeth, for none of his admissions tended to implicate her.

Nothing could be more agonising than the state of suspense, in which, for three weeks, Elizabeth remained at Whitehall, while her fate was debated by her sister's Privy Council. Fortunately for her this body was agitated with jealousies and divided interests. One party relentlessly urged the expediency of putting her to death, and argued against the folly of sparing a traitress who had entered into plots with foreign powers against her queen and country. Lord Arundel and Lord Paget were the advocates of these ruthless counsels, which, however, really emanated from the Emperor Charles V., who considered Elizabeth in the light of a powerful rival to the title of the bride elect of his son Philip.

Bishop Gardiner, who was at that time opposed to the Spanish party, acted in this instance as the friend of Elizabeth and Courtenay. He contended "that there was no proof of a treasonable correspondence between them during the late insurrections, alleging the residence of Courtenay in the queen's household at St. James's Palace, and Elizabeth's dangerous sickness at Ashridge, as reasons why they were not, and could not have been actually engaged in acts of treason, whatever might have been their intentions." In this matter, Gardiner

acted in the true spirit of a modern politician: he threw all the weight of his powerful talents and influence into the scale of mercy and justice, not for the sake of the good cause he advocated, but because it afforded him an opportunity of contending with his rivals on vantage ground.

Great pains were taken by the Spanish faction to incense the queen, to the death, against Elizabeth; Renaud even presumed to intimate that her betrothed husband, Don Philip, would not venture his person in England till Elizabeth and Courtenay were executed, and endeavoured, by every sort of argument, to tempt her to hasten her own marriage by the sacrifice of their lives. Irritated as Mary was against both, she could not resolve on shedding her sister's blood. She told the subtle statesman, "that she should act as the law decided, on the evidences of their guilt, but that the prisoners whose guilt had actually been proved, should be executed before she left her metropolis" to open her Parliament, which was summoned to meet at Oxford. She was in great perplexity in what manner to dispose of Elizabeth for her own security, before she herself departed from London, and she asked the lords of her council, one by one, "if either of them would take charge of that lady." They all declined the perilous responsibility, and then the stern resolution was adopted of sending her to the Tower, after a stormy debate in council on the justifiableness of such a measure. The truth was, Gardiner, finding himself likely to be left in a minority by his powerful rivals in the Cabinet, succumbed to their wishes, and, instead of opposing the motion, supported it, and kept his Chancellorship, for a temporary reconciliation was then effected between him and the leaders of the Spanish faction, Arundel, Paget, and Petre, of which the blood of Elizabeth was the intended cement. From the moment this trimming statesman abandoned the liberal policy he had for a few brief months advocated, he shamed not to become the most relentless and determined of those who sought to bring the royal maiden to the block. On the Friday before Palm Sunday, he, with nine more of the council, came into her presence, and there charged her, both with Wyat's conspiracy, and the rising lately made

in the west by Sir Peter Carew and others, and told her it was the queen's pleasure that she should be removed to the Tower." The name of this 'doleful prison, which her own mother, and, more recently, her cousin, Lady Jane Grey, had found their next step to the scaffold, filled her with dismay.

"I trust," she said, "that her majesty will be far more gracious, than to commit to that place a true and most innocent woman, that never has offended her in thought, word, or deed." She then entreated the lords to intercede for her with the queen, which some of them compassionately promised to do, and testified much pity for her case. About an hour after, four of them—namely, Gardiner, the Lord Steward, the Lord Treasurer, and the Earl of Sussex—returned with an order to discharge all her attendants, except her gentleman usher, three gentlewomen, and two grooms of her chamber. Hitherto Elizabeth had been in the honourable keeping of the Lord Chamberlain, no other than her uncle, Lord William Howard, and Sir John Gage, but now that a sterner policy was adopted, a guard was placed in the two ante-rooms leading to her chamber, two lords with an armed force in the hall, and two hundred Northern white coats in the garden, to prevent all possibility of rescue or escape. The next day, the Earl of Sussex, and another lord of the council, announced to her "that a barge was in readiness to convey her to the Tower, and she must prepare to go as the tide served, which would tarry for no one." This intimation seems to have inspired Elizabeth with a determination to outstay it, since the delay of every hour was important to her whose fate hung on a balance so nicely poised. She implored to see the queen her sister, and that request being denied, she then entreated for permission to write to her. This was peremptorily refused by one of the noblemen, who told her "that he durst not suffer it, neither, in his opinion, was it convenient." But the Earl of Sussex, whose generous nature was touched with manly compassion, bent his knee before her, and told her "she should have liberty to write her mind," and swore, "as he was a true man, he would himself deliver it to the queen, whatsoever came of it, and bring her back the answer."

Elizabeth then addressed, with the earnest eloquence of despair, a moving letter to her royal sister, taking good care not to bring it to a conclusion till the tide had ebbed so far as to render it impossible to shoot the bridge with a barge that turn.

Written, as has been shown, on the spur of the moment, it possesses more perspicuity and power than any other composition from the pen of Elizabeth. She had not time to hammer out artificial sentences, so completely entangled with far-fetched metaphors and pedantic quotations that a commentator is required to construe every one of her ambiguous paragraphs. No such ambiguity is used here, where she pleads for her life in good earnest, and in unequivocal language appeals boldly, from the inimical privy council, to her sister's natural affection, and the event proved in the end that she did not appeal in vain. Yet her majesty showed no symptoms of relenting, at the time it was delivered.

Sussex and the Lord Treasurer were with Elizabeth soon after nine o'clock that morning, and informed her that the time was now come, that her grace must away with them to the Tower. She replied, "The Lord's will be done; I am contented, seeing it is the queen's pleasure." Yet as she was conducted through the garden to the barge, she turned her eyes towards every window in the lingering hope, as it was thought, of seeing some one who would espouse her cause, and finding herself disappointed in this, she passionately exclaimed, "I marvel what the nobles mean by suffering me, a prince, to be led into captivity, the Lord knoweth wherefore, for myself I do not."

Her escort hurried her to the barge, being anxious to pass the shores of London at a time when they would be least likely to attract attention; but in their efforts not to be too late, they were too early, for the tide had not risen sufficiently high to allow the barge to shoot the bridge, where the fall of the water was so great that the experienced boatmen declined attempting it. The peers urged them to proceed, and they lay hovering upon the water in extreme danger for a time, and at length their caution was overpowered, by the imperative orders of the two noblemen, who insisted on their passing the arch. They reluctantly essayed

to do so, and struck the stern of the barge against the starling, and not without great difficulty and much peril succeeded in clearing it. Not one, perhaps, of the anxious spectators, who, from the houses which at that time overhung the bridge, beheld the jeopardy of that boat's company, suspected the quality of the pale girl, whose escape from a watery grave must have elicited an ejaculation of thanksgiving from many a kindly heart. Elizabeth objected to being landed at the Traitor's Gate, "neither well could she, unless she should step into the water over her shoe," she said. One of the lords told her "she must not choose," and as it was then raining, offered her his cloak. "She dashed it from her, with a good dash," says our author, and as she set her foot on the stairs, exclaimed,—“Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs. Before Thee, O God, I speak it, having no other friend but Thee alone !” To which the nobles who escorted her replied, “If it were so, it was the better for her.” When she came to the gate a number of the warders and servants belonging to the Tower were drawn up in rank, and some of them, as she passed, knelt and “prayed God to preserve her grace,” for which they were afterwards reprimanded. Instead of passing through the gates to which she had been thus conducted, Elizabeth seated herself on a cold damp stone, with the evident intention of not entering a prison which had proved so fatal to her race. Bridges, the lieutenant of the Tower, said to her, “Madam, you had best come out of the rain, for you sit unwholesomely.” “Better sit here than in a worse place,” she replied, “for God knoweth, not I, whither you will bring me.”

On hearing these words, her gentleman usher burst into a passion of weeping, which she perceiving, chid him for his weakness in thus giving way to his feelings, and discouraging her, whom he ought rather to comfort and support, especially knowing her truth to be such that no man had any cause to weep for her; when, however, she was inducted into the apartment appointed for her confinement, and the doors made fast upon her with locks and bolts, she was sore dismayed, but called for her book, and gathering the sorrowful remnant of her servants round her, begged them to unite with her in prayer for

the divine protection and succour. Meantime the lords of the council who had brought her to the Tower proceeded to deliver their instructions to the authorities there for her safe keeping; but when some measure of unnecessary rigour was suggested by one of the commissioners, the Earl of Sussex, who appears to have been thoroughly disgusted with the ungracious office that had been put upon him, and the unmanly conduct of his associates, sternly admonished them in these words :—"Let us take heed, my lords, that we go not beyond our commission, for she was our king's daughter, and is, we know, the prince next in blood, wherefore let us so deal with her now, that we have not, if it so happen, to answer for our dealings hereafter."

CHAPTER III

Elizabeth in the Tower—Examined by Gardiner and the council—Precautions against her escape—Wyat exonerates her on the scaffold—She is permitted to take the air—Illness of the queen—Attempt of Gardiner to destroy Elizabeth—Mary replaces her sister's picture—Refuses to have her tried—Elizabeth taken from the Tower—Her captivity at Woodstock—Dangerous illness—Recovery—Taken to Hampton Court—Interview with Gardiner, etc.—Her spirited conduct—Her interview with the queen—Reconciliation—Joins the royal parties at Christmas—Takes her place next the queen—Homage paid to her by Philip II.—She again rejects Philibert of Savoy—Returns to Woodstock—Philip II.'s friendship for Elizabeth—She is permitted to return to Hatfield—Sir T. Pope her castellan—His courtesy to Elizabeth—Implication in new plots—She visits the Court—Meditates withdrawing to France—Fresh reconciliation with the queen—Offer by the Prince of Sweden—Her prudent conduct—Appointed successor to the crown—Interview with the Spanish ambassador—Supps with him at Lady Clinton's—Queen Mary sends her the Crown jewels—Premature reports of Mary's death—Elizabeth sends Throckmorton—Death of the queen announced to her—Her exclamation on being saluted queen.

It was on March 18th, that Elizabeth was lodged in the Tower, and she was soon afterwards subjected to a rigorous

examination by the Lord Chancellor Gardiner, with nine other of the lords of the council. They questioned her on her motives for her projected remove to Donnington Castle during the late insurrection. Elizabeth, being taken by surprise, allowed her natural propensity for dissimulation to betray her into the childish equivocation of affecting to be unconscious that she had such a house as Donnington. When Sir James Crofts was brought in and confronted with her, she recollected herself, and said, "As touching my remove to Donnington, my officers, and you, Sir James Crofts, being then present, can well testify whether any rash or unbecoming word did then pass my lips, which might not have well become a faithful and loyal subject."

Thus adjured, Sir James Crofts knelt to her and said, "He was heartily sorry to be brought in that day to be a witness against her grace, but he took God to record that he never knew anything of her, worthy the least suspicion."

"My lords," said Elizabeth, "methinks you do me wrong to examine every mean prisoner against me ; if they have done evil, let them answer for it. I pray you, join me not with such offenders. Touching my remove from Ashridge to Donnington, I do remember me that Mr. Hoby, mine officers, and you, Sir James Crofts, had some talk about it ; but what is that to the purpose ? Might I not, my lords, go to mine own houses at all times ?"

Whereupon the Lord of Arundel, kneeling down, observed, "that her grace said truth, and that himself was sorry to see her troubled about such vain matters."

"Well, my lords," rejoined she, "you sift me narrowly, but you can do no more than God hath appointed, unto Whom I pray to forgive you all."

This generous burst of feeling on the part of the Earl of Arundel must have had a startling effect on all present, for he had been foremost in the death-cry against Elizabeth, and had urged the queen to bring her to trial and execution. Blinded by the malignant excitement of party feeling, he had, doubtless, so far deceived himself as to regard such a measure as a stern

duty to the nation at large, in order to prevent future insurrections, by sacrificing one person for the security of Mary's Government ; but when he saw and heard the young defenceless woman, whom he and his colleagues had visited in her lonely prison room, to browbeat and to entangle in her talk, his heart smote him for the cruel part he had taken, and he yielded to the generous impulse which prompted him to express his conviction of her innocence, and his remorse for the injurious treatment to which she was subjected. So powerful was the reaction of his feelings on this occasion, that he not only laboured as strenuously for the preservation of Elizabeth as he had hitherto done for her destruction, but even went so far as to offer his heir to her for a husband, and subsequently made her a tender of his own hand, and became one of the most persevering of her wooers. It is to be feared that Elizabeth, then in the bloom of youth, and very fairly endowed by nature, exerted all her fascinations to entangle the heart of this stern pillar of her sister's throne in the perplexities of a delusive passion for herself. That the royal coquette indulged the stately old earl with deceitful hopes, appears evident by the tone he assumed towards her after her accession to the throne, and his jealousy of his handsome, audacious rival, Robert Dudley ; but of this hereafter.

In after years she herself told Castelnau, the French ambassador, when adverting to this period, "that she was in great danger of losing her life from the displeasure her sister had conceived against her, in consequence of the accusations that were fabricated, on the subject of her correspondence with the King of France ; and having no hope of escaping, she desired to make her sister only one request, which was, that she might have her head cut off with a sword, as in France, and not with an axe, after the present fashion adopted in England, and therefore desired that an executioner might be sent for out of France, if it were so determined." What frightful visions, connected with the last act of her unfortunate mother's tragedy, must have haunted the prison musings of the royal captive ! who having but recently recovered from a long and severe malady, was

probably suffering from physical depression of spirits at this time. The traditions of the Tower of London affirm, that the lodging of the Princess Elizabeth was immediately under the great alarum bell, which in case of any attempt being made for her escape, was to have raised its clamorous tocsin, to summon assistance, and the hue and cry for pursuit. It seems scarcely probable, however, that she would have been placed in such close contiguity with Courtenay, unless the proximity were artfully contrived, as a snare to lure them into a stolen intercourse, or attempts at correspondence, for the purpose of furnishing a fresh mass of evidence against them.

In a letter, of April 3rd, Renaud relates the particulars of two successive interviews, which he had had with the queen and some of the members of her council, on the measures necessary to be adopted for the security of Don Philip's person, before he would venture himself in England. His excellency states, "that he had assured the queen, that it was of the utmost importance that the trials and executions of the criminals, especially those of Courtenay and Elizabeth, should be concluded before the arrival of the prince. The queen evasively replied "that she had neither rest nor sleep for the anxiety she took for the security of his highness at his coming." Gardiner then remarked, "that as long as Elizabeth was alive, there was no hope that the kingdom could be tranquil, but if every one went to work as *roundly* as he did in providing remedies, things would go on better."

"As touching Courtenay," pursues Renaud, "there is matter sufficient against him to make his punishment certain, but for Elizabeth they have not yet been able to obtain matter sufficient for her conviction, because those persons with whom she was in communication have fled. Nevertheless, her majesty tells me, "that from day to day they are finding more proofs against her."

On April 13th, Wyatt was brought to the block, and on the scaffold publicly retracted all that he had formerly said, in the vain hope of escaping the penalty of his own treason, to criminate Elizabeth and Courtenay.

Up to this period, the imprisonment of Elizabeth had been so

extremely rigorous, that she had not been permitted to cross the threshold of her own apartments, and now, her health beginning to give way again, she entreated permission to take a little air and exercise. Lord Chandos, the Constable of the Tower, expressed "his regret at being compelled to refuse her, as it was contrary to his orders." She then asked leave to walk only in the suite of apartments called the queen's lodgings. He applied to the council for instructions, and, after some discussion, the indulgence was granted, but only on condition that himself, the lord chamberlain, and three of the queen's ladies, who were selected for that purpose, accompanied her, and that she should not be permitted to show herself at the windows, which were ordered to be kept shut. A few days afterwards, as Elizabeth evidently required air as well as exercise, she was allowed to walk in a little garden that was enclosed with high pales, but the other prisoners were strictly enjoined "not so much as to look in that direction while her grace remained therein."

The Tower was at that time crowded with prisoners of State, among whom, besides Elizabeth's kinsman and political lover Courtenay, were Sir James Crofts, Sir William Saintlow, Edmund Tremaine, Harrington, and others of her own household, and last, not least, Lord Robert Dudley, who was afterwards her great favourite, the celebrated Earl of Leicester. This nobleman was born on the same day and in the same hour with Elizabeth, and had been one of her playfellows in childhood, having, as he afterwards said, "known her intimately from her eighth year." Considering the intriguing temper of both, it is probable that, notwithstanding the jealous precautions of their respective jailers, some sort of secret understanding was established between them even at this period. The signal favour that Elizabeth lavished on Robert Dudley, by appointing him her master of horse, and loading him with honours within the first week of her accession to the crown, must have originated from some powerful motive which does not appear on the surface of history. His imprisonment in the Tower was for aiding and abetting his ambitious father, the Duke of Northumberland, and his faction in raising Lady Jane Grey,

the wife of his brother, Lord Guildford Dudley, to the throne, to the prejudice of Elizabeth, no less than her sister Mary; therefore he must by some means have succeeded, not only in winning Elizabeth's pardon for this offence, but in exciting an interest in her bosom of no common nature, while they were both imprisoned in the Tower, since being immediately after his liberation employed in the wars in France, he had no other opportunity of ingratiating himself with that princess.

Great agitation pervaded Mary's privy council at this time according to the reports of Renaud to his imperial master, on the subject of Elizabeth and Courtenay. "What one counsels," says he, "another contradicts; one advises to save Courtenay, another Elizabeth, and such confusion prevails that all we expect is to see their disputes end in war and tumult."

In the midst of these agitations, the queen was stricken with a sudden illness, and it must have been at that time that Gardiner, on his own responsibility, sent a privy council warrant to the Lieutenant of the Tower for the immediate execution of Elizabeth. He knew the temper of that princess, and probably considered that in the event of the queen's death, he had sinned too deep against her to be forgiven, and therefore ventured a bold stroke to prevent the possibility of the sword of vengeance passing into her hand, by her succeeding to the royal office. Bridges, the honest Lieutenant of the Tower, observing that the queen's signature was not affixed to this illegal instrument, for the destruction of the heiress of the realm, and being sore grieved for the charge it contained, refused to execute it till he had ascertained the queen's pleasure by a direct communication on the subject with her majesty.

The delay caused by this caution preserved Elizabeth from the machinations of her foes. The queen was much displeased when she found such a plot was in agitation, and sent Sir Henry Bedingfeld, a stern Norfolk knight, in whose courage and probity she knew she could confide, with a hundred of her guard, to take the command of the Tower till she could form some plan for the removal of her sister to one of the royal residences further from the metropolis. Notwithstanding all that

had been done by friends, foes, and designing foreign potentates, to inflame the queen's mind against Elizabeth, the voice of nature was suffered to plead in behalf of the oppressed captive. Early in May it was noticed that her majesty began, when speaking of Elizabeth, to call her "sister," which she had not done before since her imprisonment, and that she had caused her portrait to be replaced next to her own in her gallery.

She had positively given up the idea of bringing either her or Courtenay to trial for their alleged offences, and had negatived the suspicious proposal of the emperor that Elizabeth should be sent into a sort of honourable banishment to the Court of his sister, the Queen of Hungary, or his own Court at Brussels. It was then suggested in council that she should be imprisoned at Pontefract Castle ; but that ill-omened place, "stained with the blood of princes," was rejected for the royal bowers of Woodstock, where it was finally determined to send her, under the charge of Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and Lord Williams of Tame, who were both staunch Catholics.

May 19th, is generally mentioned as the date of Elizabeth's removal.

Her confinement at Woodstock was no less rigorous than when she was in the Tower. Sixty soldiers were on guard all day, both within and without the quarter of the palace, where she was in ward ; and forty kept watch within the walls all night ; and though she obtained permission to walk in the gardens, it was under very strict regulations ; and five or six locks were made fast after her whenever she came within the appointed bounds for her joyless recreation. Although Sir Henry Bedingfeld has been very severely censured on account of these restraints, and other passages of his conduct, with regard to the captive princess, there is reason to believe that his harshness has been exaggerated, and that he had great cause to suspect that the ruthless party who thirsted for Elizabeth's blood, having been foiled in their eagerly expressed wish of seeing her brought to the block, were conspiring to take her off by murder. This he was determined should not be done while she was in his charge.

It is said, that once, having locked the garden gates when Elizabeth was walking, she passionately upbraided him for it, and called him "her jailer;" on which he knelt to her, beseeching her, "not to give him that harsh name, for he was one of her officers appointed to serve her, and guard her from the dangers by which she was beset."

Among the incidents of Elizabeth's imprisonment, a mysterious tale is told of an attempt made by one Basset, a creature of Gardiner, against her life, during the temporary absence of Sir Henry Bedingsfeld. This Basset, it seems, had been, with five-and-twenty disguised ruffians, loitering with evil intentions at Bladenbridge, seeking to obtain access to the Lady Elizabeth, on secret and important business, as he pretended; but Sir Henry had given such strict cautions to his brother, whom he left as deputy castellan in his absence, that no one should approach the royal prisoner, that the project was defeated. Once, a dangerous fire broke out in the quarter of the palace where she was confined, which was kindled, apparently not by accident, between the ceiling of the room under her chamber and her chamber floor, by which her life would have been greatly endangered, had it not been providentially discovered before she retired to rest. The lofty spirit of Elizabeth, though unsubdued, was saddened by the perils and trials to which she was daily exposed, and in the bitterness of her heart she once expressed a wish to change fortunes with a milkmaid, whom she saw singing merrily over her pail, while milking the cows in Woodstock Park, for she said, "that milkmaid's lot was better than hers, and her life merrier."

On June 8th, Elizabeth was so ill, that an express was sent to the Court, for two physicians to come to her assistance. They were sent, and continued in attendance upon her for several days, when youth and a naturally fine constitution enabled her to triumph over a malady that had, in all probability, been brought on by anxiety of mind.

The physicians, on their return, made a friendly report of the loyal feelings of the princess towards the queen, which appears to have had a favourable effect on Mary's mind.

"And now," says Camden, "the Princess Elizabeth, guiding herself like a ship in tempestuous weather, heard divine service after the Romish manner, was frequently confessed, and at the pressing instances of Cardinal Pole, and for fear of death, professed herself to be of the Roman Catholic religion." The queen, doubting her sincerity, caused her to be questioned as to her belief in transubstantiation, on which Elizabeth, being pressed to declare her opinion, as to the real presence of the Saviour in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, replied in the following extempore lines :

"Christ was the word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it,
And what His word did make it,
That I believe, and take it."

It was impossible for either Catholic or Protestant, to impugn the orthodoxy of this simple scriptural explanation, of one of the sublimest mysteries of the Christian faith. It silenced the most subtle of her foes, at least they forbore to harass her, with questions on theological subjects. Dr. Storey, however, in one of his fierce declamations against heretics, declared "that it was of little avail destroying the branches, as long as the root of all heresies," meaning the Princess Elizabeth, "were suffered to remain."

The delusive hopes which Queen Mary entertained in the autumn of that year, of bringing an heir to England, appear to have altered Elizabeth's position, even with her own party, for a time, and Philip, being desirous of pleasing the people of England, is supposed to have interceded with his consort for the liberation of all the prisoners in the Tower, also that he requested that his sister-in-law, the Princess Elizabeth, might be admitted to share in the Christmas festivities at Hampton Court.

She travelled from Woodstock under the charge of Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and on reaching Hampton Court, was ushered into the "prince's lodgings," but the doors were closed upon her and guarded, so that she had reason to suppose she was still to be treated as a prisoner. Soon after her arrival she was visited by Gardiner, and three other of the queen's Cabinet, whom, without

waiting to hear their errand, she addressed in the following words :

"My lords, I am glad to see you, for methinks I have been kept a great while from you, desolately alone. Wherefore I would entreat you to be a means to the king's and queen's majesties, that I may be delivered from my imprisonment, in which I have been kept a long time, as to you, my lords, is not unknown."

Gardiner, in reply, told her "she must then confess her fault, and put herself on the queen's mercy." She replied, "that rather than she would do so, she would lie in prison all her life, that she had never offended against the queen in thought, word, or deed, that she craved no mercy at her majesty's hand, but rather desired to put herself on the law."

The next day Gardiner and his colleagues came to her again, and Gardiner told her on his knee, "that the queen marvelled at her boldness in refusing to confess her offence, so that it might seem, as if her majesty had wrongfully imprisoned her grace."

"Nay," replied Elizabeth, "she may, if it please her, punish me as she thinketh good."

"Her majesty willeth me to tell you," retorted Gardiner, "that you must tell another tale ere that you are set at liberty." Elizabeth replied, "that she had as lief be in prison, with honesty, as to be abroad suspected of her majesty," adding, "that which I have said I will stand to."

"Then," said Gardiner, "your grace hath the vantage of me and these lords, for your long and wrongful imprisonment."

"What advantage I have you know," replied Elizabeth ; "I seek no vantage at your hands for your so dealing with me—but God forgive you and me also." They then, finding no concessions were to be obtained from her, withdrew, and Elizabeth was left in close confinement for a week, at the end of which time she was startled by receiving a summons, to the queen's presence one night, at ten o'clock.

Great confusion exists among historians, as to the year in which this memorable interview took place, but there can be no doubt that it was in the autumn of 1554, because of the

presence of Philip of Spain, and his friend Philibert of Savoy, who both graced the festivals of the English Court that Christmas and no other, and it is supposed, that one object of bringing Elizabeth into the royal circle, on this occasion, was to afford the gallant Savoyard an opportunity of pleading his own cause to her in person.

Philibert was not only invited to receive the hand of Elizabeth, but was actually inducted in her town residence, during his stay in London. "The prince is expected in four days," writes Noailles to his sovereign, "and apartments are prepared for him in Somerset House, which now belongs to the Lady Elizabeth." When he arrived he was so very ill from sea-sickness that he was obliged to stay at Dover fifteen days, to the great regret of the king and queen.

At the brilliant Christmas-eve festival, Elizabeth appeared once more publicly in her sister's palace, as the second royal personage in the realm; as such she took her place, both at feasts and tournaments, before the assembled chivalry of England, Spain, and Flanders, in the presence of Alva, Egmont, Ruy Gomez, and other distinguished men, whose fame for good or evil expanded throughout Europe. Her own suitor, Philibert Emanuel, the most illustrious for worth and valour, was also present. At this banquet, Elizabeth was seated at the queen's table—next the royal canopy or cloth of estate. She retired, however, to her ladies, before the masking and dancing began, perhaps to avoid any communication with her suitor, in the rejection of whose addresses (after events fully manifested) the queen supported her. It would have been a more deadly blow to the Protestant interests of this country, than all the persecutions with which it was visited in the succeeding years of Mary's reign, had Elizabeth, while yet her character was flexible, married this great man. In this case, as may be gathered from his matrimonial felicity with Margaret of Valois, the intellectual daughter of Francis I., the personal character and happiness of Elizabeth would have been improved, but England might have remained, if we may judge from the slavish devotion of the era to the religion of their monarch, a Roman Catholic country.

The extreme beauty and grace of Courtenay's person, perhaps rendered Elizabeth indifferent to the addresses of Philibert Emanuel.

Elizabeth failed not to avail herself of every opportunity of paying her court to her royal brother-in-law, with whom she was on very friendly terms, although she would not comply with his earnest wish, of her becoming the wife of his friend and ally.

The period of Elizabeth's return to Woodstock is doubtful ; but it does not appear that she was under any particular restraint there, for she had all her own people about her, and early in the spring, 1555, some of the members of her household were accused of practising, by enchantment, against the queen's life. She escaped a public implication in the charge of these occult practices ; but it was probably the cause of her removal from Woodstock, and of her being once more conducted as a prisoner of State to Hampton Court, which, according to most authorities, she was, a second time, April, 1555.

It has been generally said, that she was indebted for her liberation to the good offices of Philip of Spain, who, when he found himself disappointed in his hopes of an heir to England by Queen Mary, and perceived on how precarious a thread her existence hung, became fully aware of the value of Elizabeth's life, as the sole barrier to the ultimate recognition of Mary, Queen of Scots and Dauphiness of France, as Queen of Great Britain. To prevent so dangerous a preponderancy in the balance of power from falling to his political rival, the monarch of France, he wisely determined, that Elizabeth's petty misdemeanours should be winked at, and the queen finally gave her permission to reside once more in royal state, at her own favourite abode, Hatfield House, in Hertfordshire. At parting, Mary placed a ring on the princess's finger, to the value of seven hundred crowns, as a pledge of amity.

It was not, however, Mary's intention to restore Elizabeth so entirely to liberty, as to leave her the unrestrained mistress of her own actions, and Sir Thomas Pope was entrusted with the responsible office of residing in her house, for the purpose of restraining her from intriguing with suspected persons, either

abroad or at home. Veiling the intimation of her sovereign will under the semblance of a courteous recommendation, Mary presented this gentleman to Elizabeth, as an officer who was henceforth to reside in her family, and who would do his best to render her and her household comfortable. Elizabeth, to whom Sir Thomas Pope was already well known, had the tact to take this in good part. She had indeed reason to rejoice that her keeper, while she remained as a State prisoner at large, was a person of such honourable and friendly conditions, as this learned and worthy gentleman. The fetters in which he held her were more like flowery wreaths flung lightly round her, to attach her to a bower of royal pleasance, than aught which might remind her of the stern restraints by which she was surrounded during her incarceration in the Tower and her subsequent abode at Woodstock in the summer and autumn of 1554. There is reason to believe, that she did not take her final departure from the Court till late in the autumn. It is certain, that she came by water to meet the queen her sister and Philip, at Greenwich, for the purpose of taking a personal farewell of him, at his embarkation for Flanders.

During King Philip's absence he manifested a great interest in the welfare of Elizabeth, whether personal or political it is not so easy to ascertain. Her vanity led her to believe that her brother-in-law was in love with her, and much she boasted of the same in after life. Meantime he wrote many letters to his wife, Queen Mary, and to some Spanish grandees, resident at the English Court, commending Elizabeth to their kindness. She made many visits to the queen, and went to mass every day, besides fasting with her very sedulously, in order to qualify themselves, for the reception of the pope's pardon, and to fit them for the benefits of the jubilee which he had granted.

Altogether Elizabeth appeared to be fairly in her sister's good graces ; nor did Mary ever betray the least personal jealousy, respecting King Philip's regard for her sister. Yet contemporaries, and even Elizabeth herself, after the queen's death, had much to say on the subject, attributing to him partiality beyond the due degree of brotherhood ; insomuch, that, many

years subsequently, Thomas Cecil, the eldest son of Lord Burleigh, repeated at Elizabeth's Court, that King Philip had been heard to say, after his return to Spain, "That whatever he suffered from Queen Elizabeth was the just judgment of God, because, being married to Queen Mary, whom he thought to be a most virtuous and good lady, yet in the fancy of love he could not affect her; but as for the Lady Elizabeth he was enamoured of her, being a fair and beautiful woman."

When Elizabeth took her final departure from London to Hatfield that autumn, October 18th, the people crowded to obtain a sight of her; "great and small," says Noailles, followed her through the city, and greeted her with acclamations and such vehement manifestations of affection, that she was fearful it would expose her to the jealousy of the Court, and with her wonted exercise of caution she fell back behind some of the officers in her train, as if unwilling to attract public attention and applause. At Hatfield she was permitted to surround herself, with her old accustomed train of attached servants, among whom were her beloved governess, Mrs. Katharine Ashley, her husband, the Parrys, and last, not least, her learned preceptor Roger Ascham, who had obtained the preferment of Latin secretary to her sister, the queen, and was permitted to visit and resume his instructions to Elizabeth, who, in her twenty-second year, was better qualified than ever to make the most of the advantages she enjoyed under such an instructor.

Elizabeth had the prospect of a new royal suitor at this period, for a report was prevalent, when the Archduke of Austria came to visit his kinsman, Philip II., at Brussels, December, 1555, that his intention was to propose for her hand; as for her former lover, Philibert Emanuel, of Savoy, he had committed himself both with Philip and Elizabeth, having been seen making love from his window to the fair Duchess of Lorraine, Christina of Denmark, and for the present the princess had a respite from his unwelcome addresses.

The spring and summer of 1556 were agitated by a series of new plots by the indefatigable conspirators who made Elizabeth's name the rallying point of their schemes of insurrection, and

this whether she consented or not. It was extremely dangerous for her, that persons of her household were always involved in these attempts. In the conspiracy, between the King of France and Sir Henry Dudley, to depose Mary and raise Elizabeth to the throne, two of Elizabeth's chief officers were deeply engaged; these men, Peckham and Werne, were tried and executed. Their confessions, as usual, implicated Elizabeth, who, it is asserted, owed her life to the interposition of King Philip; likewise, it is said that he obliged Mary to drop all inquiry into her guilt, and to give out that she believed Peckham and Werne had made use of the name of their mistress without her authority. Moreover, Mary sent her a ring in token of her amity.

In the following November, Elizabeth having been honoured with an invitation to her sister's Court, came to London in state. Her entrance and the dress of her retinue, are thus quaintly recorded by a contemporary. "The 18th day of November came riding through Smithfield and Old Baily, and through Fleet Street unto Somerset Place, my good lady Elizabeth's grace, the queen's sister, with a great company of velvet coats and chains, her grace's gentlemen, and after, a great company of her men, all in red coats, guarded with a broad guard of black velvet and cuts" (slashes).

Elizabeth found herself treated with so many flattering marks of attention, by the nobility as well as the Commons, whose darling she always had been, that she assembled a sort of Court around her, and determined to settle herself in her town residence for the winter. She was, however, assailed by the council, at the instance of her royal brother-in-law, with a renewal of the persecution she had undergone in favour of her persevering suitor, Philibert of Savoy. The imperial ambassadors had been very urgent with the queen on the subject, and Elizabeth found she had only been sent for in order to conclude the marriage treaty. The earnestness with which this was pushed on, immediately after the death of Courtenay, naturally favours the idea, that a positive contract of marriage had subsisted between that unfortunate nobleman and the princess, which had formed a legal impediment to her entering into any other matrimonial

engagement during his life. She was, however, positive in her rejection of the Duke of Savoy's hand, though, as before, she protested her unalterable devotion to a maiden life, as the reason of her refusal. After this decision she was compelled to give up the hope of spending a festive Christmas in London, and the Cottonian MS. records her departure, after the brief sojourn of one week, in these words :—

“On the third day of September came riding from her place (Somerset House) my Lady Elizabeth's grace, from Somerset Place, down Fleet Street and through Old Baily and Smithfield, and so her grace took her way towards Bishop Hatfield.”

Such was the disgust that Elizabeth had conceived during her late visit to Court, or the apprehensions that had been excited by the intimidation used by the Spanish party, that she appears to have contemplated the very impolitic step of secretly withdrawing from the realm that was so soon to become her own, and taking refuge in France. Henry II. had never ceased urging her by his wily agent Noailles to accept an asylum in his Court, doubtless with the intention of securing the only person who, in the event of Queen Mary's death, would stand between his daughter-in-law and the crown of England. Noailles had, however, interfered in so unseemly a manner in the intrigues and plots that agitated England, that he had been recalled, and superseded in his office by his brother, the Bishop of Acqs, a man of better principles, and who scrupled to become a party in the iniquitous scheme of deluding a young and inexperienced princess to her own ruin. With equal kindness and sincerity this worthy ecclesiastic told the Countess of Sussex, when she came to him secretly in disguise, to ask his assistance in conveying the Lady Elizabeth to France, “that it was an unwise project, and that he would advise the princess to take example by the conduct of her sister, who, if she had listened to the counsels of those who would have persuaded her to take refuge with the emperor, would still have remained in exile.” The countess returned again to him on the same errand, and he then plainly told her, “that if ever Elizabeth hoped to ascend the throne of England, she must never leave the

realm." A few years later he declared "that Elizabeth was indebted to him for her crown." Whatever might be the cloud that had darkened the prospects of the princess, at the period when she had cherished intentions so fatal to her own interests, it quickly disappeared, and on February 25th, 1557, she came from her house at Hatfield to London, "attended by a noble company of lords and gentlemen, to do her duty to the queen, and rested at Somerset House till the 28th, when she repaired to her majesty at Whitehall with many lords and ladies." These visits were probably on account of the return of Philip of Spain, which restored the queen to unwonted cheerfulness for a time, and caused a brief interval of gaiety in the lugubrious Court.

We are indebted to the lively pen of Giovanni Michele, the Venetian ambassador, for the following graphic sketch of the person and character of Elizabeth, at this interesting period of her life. "*Miladi Elizabeth*," says he, "is a lady of great elegance, both of body and mind, though her face may be called pleasing rather than beautiful. She is tall and well made, her complexion fine, though rather sallow." Her bloom must have been prematurely faded by sickness and anxiety; for Elizabeth could not have been more than three and twenty at this period. "Her eyes, but above all, her hands, which she takes care not to conceal, are of superior beauty. In her knowledge of the Greek and Italian languages, she surpasses the queen, and takes so much pleasure in the latter, that she will converse with Italians in no other tongue. Her wit and understanding are admirable, as she has proved by her conduct in the midst of suspicion and danger, when she concealed her religion, and comported herself like a good Catholic." Michele proceeds to describe Elizabeth "as proud and dignified in her manners; for though she is well aware what sort of a mother she had, she is also aware that this mother of hers was united to the king in wedlock, with the sanction of Holy Church, and the concurrence of the primate of the realm."

Michele adds, "that the princess had contrived to ingratiate herself with the King of Spain, through whose influence the

queen was prevented from having her declared illegitimate, as she had it in her power to do, by an Act of Parliament, which would exclude her from the throne. It is believed," continues he, "that but for this interference of the king, the queen would, without remorse, chastise her in the severest manner ; for whatever plots against the queen are discovered, my Lady Elizabeth, or some of her people, are always sure to be mentioned among the persons concerned in them. She is, to appearance, at liberty in her country residence, twelve miles from London, but really surrounded by spies and shut in with guards, so that no one comes or goes, and nothing is spoken or done without the queen's knowledge." Such is the testimony of the Venetian ambassador, of Elizabeth's position in her sister's Court, but it should be remembered that he is the same man, who had intrigued with the conspirators to supply them with arms, and that his information is avowedly only hearsay evidence.

The pleasant and sisterly intercourse, which was for a brief time established between the royal sisters, was destined to be once more interrupted, by the pertinacious interference of King Philip, in favour of his friend's matrimonial suit for Elizabeth. Her hand was, probably, the reward with which that monarch had promised to guerdon his brave friend, for his good services at St. Quentin, but the gallant Savoyard found that it was easier to win a battle in the field, under every disadvantage, than to conquer the determination of an obdurate lady-love. Elizabeth would not be disposed of in marriage to please any one, and as she made her refusal a matter of conscience, the queen ceased to importune her on the subject. Philip, as we have seen, endeavoured to compel his reluctant wife, to interpose her authority, to force Elizabeth to fulfil the engagement he had made for her, and Mary proved, that she had, on occasion, a will of her own as well as her sister. In short, the ladies made common cause, and quietly resisted his authority. He had sent his two noble kinswomen, the Duchess of Parma and Lorraine, to persuade Elizabeth to comply with his desire, and to convey her to the Continent, as the bride-elect of his friend ; but Elizabeth, by her sister's advice, declined receiving these fair envoys, and

they were compelled to return without fulfilling the object of their mission.

Meantime, Elizabeth received several overtures from the ambassador of the great Gustavus Vasa, King of Sweden, who was desirous of obtaining her in marriage for his eldest son, Prince Eric. She declined listening to this proposal, because it was not made to her through the medium of the queen her sister. The ambassador told her, in reply, "that the King of Sweden, his master, as a gentleman and a man of honour thought it most proper to make the first application to herself, in order to ascertain whether it would be agreeable to her, to enter into such an alliance, and if she signified her consent, he would then, as a king, propose it in due form to her majesty." This delicacy of feeling was in unison with the chivalric character of Gustavus Vasa, who, having delivered his country from a foreign yoke, had achieved the reformation of her Church without persecution or bloodshed, and regarding Elizabeth as a Protestant princess who was suffering for conscience' sake, was nobly desirous of making her his daughter-in-law. Elizabeth, however, who had previously rejected the heir of his neighbour, Christian of Denmark, desired the Swedish envoy to inform his master "that she could not listen to any proposals of the kind that were not conveyed to her through the queen's authority," and at the same time declared, "that if left to her own free will she would always prefer a maiden life." This affair reaching her majesty's ears, she sent for Sir Thomas Pope to Court, and having received from him a full account of this secret transaction, she expressed herself well pleased with the wise and dutiful conduct of Elizabeth, and directed him to write a letter to her expressive of her approbation. When Sir Thomas Pope returned to Hatfield, Mary commanded him to repeat her commendations to the princess, and to inform her "that an official communication had now been made to her, from the King of Sweden, touching the match with his son, on which she desired Sir Thomas to ascertain her sister's sentiments from her own lips, and to communicate how her grace stood affected in this matter, and also to marriage in general."

Sir Thomas Pope, in compliance with this injunction, made the following report of what passed between himself and Elizabeth on the subject :—

"First, after I had declared to her grace how well the queen's majesty liked of her prudent and honourable answer made to the same messenger (from the King of Sweden), I then opened unto her grace, the effects of the said messenger's credence, which after her grace had heard, I said that the queen's highness had sent me to her grace, not only to declare the same, but also to understand how her grace liked the said motion. Whereunto, after a little pause, her grace answered in form following :—

"Master Pope, I require you, after my most humble commendations unto the queen's majesty, to render unto the same like thanks, that it pleased her highness of her goodness, to conceive so well of my answer made to the said messenger, and herewithal of her princely commendation, with such speed to command you by your letters, to signify the same unto me, who before remained wonderfully perplexed, fearing that her majesty might mistake the same, for which her goodness I acknowledge myself bound to honour, serve, love and obey her highness during my life. Requiring you also to say unto her majesty, that in the king my brother's time, there was offered me a very honourable marriage or two, and ambassadors sent to treat with me touching the same, whereunto I made my humble suit unto his highness, (as some of honour yet living can be testimonies) that it would like the same (King Edward) to give me leave with his grace's favour to remain in that estate I was, which of all others best pleased me, and in good faith, I pray you say unto her highness, I am even at this present of the same mind, and so intend to continue with her majesty's favour, assuring her highness I so well like this state, as I persuade myself there is not any kind of life comparable to it. And as concerning my liking the motion made by the said messenger, I beseech you say unto her majesty, that to my remembrance I never heard of his master before this time, and that I so well like both the message and the messenger, as I shall most humbly pray God upon my knees, that from henceforth I may never hear of the one nor the other."

Not the most civil way in the world, it must be owned, of dismissing a remarkably civil offer, but Elizabeth gives her reason, in a manner artfully calculated to ingratiate herself with her royal sister. "And were there nothing else," pursues she, "to move me to dislike the motion, other than that his master would attempt the same without making the queen's majesty privy thereunto, it were cause sufficient." "And when her grace had thus ended," resumes Sir Thomas Pope, in conclusion, "I was so bold, as of myself, to say unto her grace, her pardon

first required, that I thought few or none would believe but her grace would be right well contented to marry, so there were some *honourable marriage* offered her, by the queen's highness, or with her majesty's assent. Whereunto her grace answered, 'What I shall do hereafter I know not, but I assure you, upon my truth and fidelity, and as God be merciful unto me, I am not at this time otherwise minded than I have declared unto you. No, though I were offered the greatest prince in all Europe.'"

This letter affords unquestionable proof that Elizabeth was allowed full liberty to decide for herself as to her acceptance or rejection of this Protestant suitor for her hand, her brother-in-law, King Philip, not being so much as consulted on the subject. Camden asserts that after Philip had given up the attempt of forcing her to wed his friend, Philibert of Savoy, he would fain have made up a marriage between her and his own son, Don Carlos, who was then a boy of sixteen; but he finally, when he became a widower, offered himself to her acceptance, instead of his heir.

Elizabeth was so fortunate as to escape any implication in Stafford's rebellion, but among the Spaniards a report was circulated that her hand was destined to reward the Earl of Westmoreland, by whom the insurrection was quelled. There were also rumours of an engagement between her and the Earl of Arundel. Though much has been asserted to the contrary, the evidences of history prove that Elizabeth was on amicable terms with Queen Mary at the time of her death, and for some months previous to that event.

On November 9th, the Count de Feria, one of Philip's most confidential counsellors, brought the dying queen a letter from her absent consort, who, already embarrassed in a war with France, and dreading the possibility of the Queen of Scots being placed on the throne, requested Mary to declare Elizabeth her successor. The queen had anticipated his desire, by her previous appointment of Elizabeth, from whom she, however, exacted a profession of her adherence to the Catholic creed.

On November 10th, Count de Feria, in obedience to the

directions of his royal master, went to pay his compliments to the princess, and to offer her the assurances of Don Philip's friendship and goodwill. Elizabeth was then at the house of Lord Clinton, about thirteen miles from London. There Feria sought and obtained an interview with her, which forms an important episode in the early personal annals of this great sovereign. Elizabeth expressed herself as much gratified by the count's visit, and the obliging message he had brought from his sovereign, of whom she spoke in friendly terms, and acknowledged that she had been under some obligations to him when she was in prison ; but when the count endeavoured to persuade her that she was indebted, for the recognition of her right to the royal succession, neither to Queen Mary nor her council, but solely to Don Philip, she exhibited some degree of incredulity. In the same conference, Elizabeth complained "that she had never been given more than £3000 of maintenance, and that she knew the king had received large sums of money." The count contradicted this, because he knew it to be a fact that Queen Mary had once given her £7000, and some jewels of great value, to relieve her from debts in which she had involved herself, in consequence of indulging in some expensive entertainments in the way of ballets. She then observed, "that Philip had tried hard to induce her to enter into a matrimonial alliance with the Duke of Savoy, but that she knew how much favour the queen had lost by marrying a foreigner." The count probably felt the incivility of this remark, but only replied carelessly, in general terms. Here the details of the conversation end, and Feria proceeds to communicate his own opinion of the princess. "It appears to me," says he, "that she is a woman of extreme vanity, but acute. She seems greatly to admire her father's system of government. I fear much that in religion she will not go right, as she seems inclined to favour men who are supposed to be heretics, and they tell me the ladies who are about her are all so. She appears highly indignant at the things that have been done against her during her sister's reign. She is much attached to the people, and is very confident that they are all on her side, (which is indeed true ;) in fact, she says 'it

is they that have placed her in the position she at present holds,' as the declared successor to the crown." On this point, Elizabeth, with great spirit, refused to acknowledge that she was under any obligation either to the King of Spain, his council, or even to the nobles of England, though she said "that they had all pledged themselves to remain faithful to her." "Indeed," concludes the count, "there is not a heretic or traitor in all the realm who has not started, as if from the grave, to seek her and offer her their homage."

Two or three days before her death, Queen Mary sent Jane Dormer, afterwards Duchess de Feria, to deliver the Crown jewels to Elizabeth, together with her dying requests to that princess, "first, that she would be good to her servants; secondly, that she would repay the sums of money that had been lent on privy seals; and, lastly, that she would continue the Church as she had re-established it." Philip had directed his envoy to add to these jewels a valuable casket of his own, which he had left at Whitehall, and which Elizabeth had always greatly admired. In memory of the various civilities this monarch had shown to Elizabeth, she always kept his portrait in her bed-chamber, even after they became deadly political foes.

During the last few days of Mary's life, Hatfield became the resort of the time-serving courtiers, who sought to worship Elizabeth as the rising sun. The Count de Feria readily penetrated the secret of those who were destined to hold a distinguished place in her councils, and predicted that Cecil would be her principal secretary. She did not conceal her dislike of her kinsman, Cardinal Pole, then on his death-bed, but her pleasure or displeasure was of little moment to him in that hour, for the sands in the waning glass of life ebbed with him scarcely less quickly than with his departing sovereign and friend, Queen Mary. She died on November 17th, he on the 18th.

Reports of the death of Mary were certainly circulated some hours before it took place, and Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, who was secretly employed by Elizabeth to give her the earliest possible intelligence of that event, rode off at fiery speed to

Hatfield to communicate the tidings. The caution of Elizabeth taught her that it was dangerous to take any steps towards her own recognition till she could ascertain, to a certainty, the truth of a report that might only have been devised, to betray her into some act that might be construed into treason. She bade Throckmorton "hasten to the palace, and request one of the ladies of the bed-chamber, who was in her confidence, if the queen were really dead, to send her, as a token, the black enamelled ring which her majesty wore night and day."

While he was on his road back to London, Mary expired, and ere he could return with the ring to satisfy Elizabeth of the truth of that event, which busy rumour had ante-dated, a deputation from the late queen's council had already arrived at Hatfield, to apprise her of the demise of her sister, and to offer their homage to her as their rightful sovereign. Though well prepared for the intelligence, she appeared at first amazed and overpowered at what she heard, and, drawing a deep respiration, she sank upon her knees and exclaimed :—" *O domino factum est illud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris !* " "It is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes," "which," says our authority, (Sir Robert Naunton,) "we find to this day on the stamp of her gold, with this on her silver—*Posui Deum adiutorem meum,*" "I have chosen God for my helper."

Eight-and-twenty years afterwards, Elizabeth, in a conversation with the envoys of France, Chasteauneuf and Bellievre, spoke of the tears which she had shed on the death of her sister Mary, but she is the only person by whom they were ever recorded.

CHAPTER IV

Recognition of Elizabeth in Parliament—Proclaimed queen in Westminster Hall, etc.—Her first council—Cecil placed at the helm—Elizabeth's State entry into London—Sojourn at the Tower—Temporizes with Church reform—Hears mass for a month—Rejects it on Christmas Day—Her coronation—She re-establishes the Reformed Church—Declares that she will die a virgin—Refuses Philip II.—Her perilous position in Europe—Instals her favourite, Robert Dudley, as Knight of the Garter—Suitors for her hand—Wooed by the Earls of Arran and Arundel—They are rivalled by Lord Robert Dudley—Scandals regarding Elizabeth—Offers of the Archduke Charles and Eric of Sweden—Reports of her marriage with Robert Dudley—Elizabeth's coinage—Her antipathy to J. Knox—Censures the marriages of the clergy—Severity to Lady K. Grey—Differences with the Queen of Scots—Refuses her safe conduct.

WHILE Queen Mary lay on her death-bed, the greatest alarm had prevailed regarding the expected crisis. A contemporary, who watched closely the temper of the public, thus describes the anxieties of the responsible part of the community :—"The rich were fearful, the wise careful, the honestly disposed doubtful," and he adds, emphatically, "the discontented and desperate were joyful, wishing for strife as the door for plunder." All persons, therefore, who had anything to lose, whatever their religious bias might be, must have felt relieved at the peaceable accession of Elizabeth.

On the morning of November 17th, Parliament (which was then sitting) assembled betimes, for the dispatch of business. The demise of the Crown was, however, only known in the palace. Before noon, Dr. Heath, the Archbishop of York and Lord Chancellor of England, sent a message to the Speaker of the House of Commons, requesting "that he, with the knights and burgesses of the nether House, would without delay adjourn to the upper House, to give their assents, in a matter of the utmost importance." When the Commons were assembled in the

House of Lords, silence being proclaimed, Lord Chancellor Heath addressed the united senate in these words :—

“The cause of your summons hither, at this time, is to signify to you, that all the Lords, here present, are certainly certified, that God this morning hath called to His mercy our late sovereign lady, Queen Mary, which hap, as it is most heavy and grievous to us, so have we no less cause otherwise, to rejoice with praise to Almighty God, for leaving to us a true, lawful, and right inheritrix to the crown of this realm, which is the Lady Elizabeth, second daughter to our late sovereign, of noble memory, Henry VIII., and sister to our said late queen, of whose most lawful right and title to the crown, thanks be to God, we need not doubt.

“Albeit, the Parliament (House of Commons) by the heavy accident of Queen Mary's death, did dissolve, yet, as they had been elected to represent the common people of the realm, and to deal for them in matters of State, they could no way better discharge that trust than in joining with the Lords, in publishing the next succession to the crown.

“Wherefore the Lords of this House have determined, with your assents and consents, to pass from hence into the palace, and there to proclaim the Lady Elizabeth queen of this realm, without any further *tract* of time.”

“God save Queen Elizabeth !” was the response of the Lords and Commons to the speech of their Lord Chancellor—“Long may Queen Elizabeth reign over us !” “And so,” adds our chronicle, “was this Parliament dissolved by the act of God.”

Thus, through the wisdom and patriotism of the Lord Chancellor of England, was the title of Queen Elizabeth rendered indisputable. All the important Acts of the united Houses of Parliament respecting her recognition were completed before the clock struck twelve, that November 17th. The Lords, with the heralds, then entered the Palace of Westminster, and directly before its hall door, after several solemn soundings of trumpets, the new queen was proclaimed “Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, and defender of the faith, &c.” This “&c.” hides an important historical fact—namely, that she was *not* then proclaimed supreme head of the Church.

While these important scenes were transacting in her senate and metropolis, the new sovereign remained, probably out of respect to her sister's memory, in retirement at Hatfield, and the ceremony of her proclamation did not take place there till the

19th, when it was performed before the gates of Hatfield House. In the same day and hour, however, in which her accession to the regal office was announced to her, she entered upon the high and responsible duties of a vocation for which few princes possessed such eminent qualifications as herself.

The privy council repaired to the new queen at Hatfield, and there she sat in council for the first time with them, November 20th. Sir Thomas Parry, the cofferer of her household, Cave, Rogers, and Sir William Cecil, were sworn in as members.

Her majesty's address to Cecil, on that occasion, is a noble summary of the duties which he was expected to perform to his queen and country :—

“I give you this charge that you shall be of my privy council, and content yourself to take pains for me and my realm. This judgment I have of you, that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift, and that you will be faithful to the State; and that, without respect to my private will, you will give me that counsel which you think best, and if you shall know anything necessary to be declared to me of secrecy, you shall show it to myself only, and assure yourself I will not fail to keep taciturnity therein, and therefore herewith I charge you.”

Elizabeth left no room for doubt or speculation among the eager competitors for her favour, as to the minister whom she intended to guide the helm of State, for she accepted a note of advice from Sir William Cecil on the most urgent matters that required her attention, that very day, and appointed him her principal Secretary of State. The political tie that was then knit between Cecil and his royal mistress, though occasionally shaken, was only broken by the death of that great statesman, who was able to elevate or bend the powers of his acute intellect to all matters of government, from measures that rendered England the arbitress of Europe, to the petty details of the milliner and tailor, in sumptuary laws.

Elizabeth commenced her progress to her metropolis, November 23rd, attended by a magnificent retinue of lords, ladies, and gentlemen, and a prodigious concourse of people, who poured out of London and its adjacent villages, to behold and welcome her.

As she entered the Tower, she majestically addressed those about her. "Some," said she, "have fallen from being princes of this land, to be prisoners in this place; I am raised from being prisoner in this place to be prince of this land. *That* dejection was a work of God's justice; *this* advancement is a work of His mercy; as they were to yield patience for the one, so I must bear myself to God thankful, and to men merciful, for the other."

She remained at the Tower till December 5th, holding privy councils of mighty import, whose chief tenor was to ascertain what members of the late queen's Catholic council would coalesce with her own party—which were the remnants of the administration of Edward VI.—Cecil, Bacon, Sadler, Parr, Russell, and the Dudleys. Likewise to produce a modification between the Church of Edward VI. and the Henrican, or anti-Papal Church of her father, which might claim to be a reformed Church, with herself for its supreme head. On December 5th the queen removed from the Tower by water, and took up her abode at Somerset House, where a privy council was held daily for fifteen days.

Of the Catholic members of the privy council who remained, Lord William Howard was her majesty's uncle and entire friend, Sackville was her cousin, the Earl of Arundel her lover. The Marquis of Winchester acted according to his characteristic description of his own policy, by playing the part of the willow, rather than the oak, and from one of the most cruel of Elizabeth's persecutors, became at once the supplest of her instruments. His example was imitated by others in this list, who for the most part appeared duly impressed with the spirit of the constitutional maxim—"The crown takes away all defects."

Elizabeth acted much as Mary did at her accession; she forbade any one to preach without her licence, and ostensibly left the rites of religion as she found them, but she, for a time, wholly locked up the famous pulpit of political sermons, Saint Paul's Cross.

Meantime, mass was daily celebrated in the Chapel Royal,

and throughout the realm ; and the queen, though well known to be a Protestant, conformed outwardly to the ceremonial observances of the Church of Rome.

It was desirable that the coronation of Elizabeth should take place speedily, in order that she might have the benefit of the oaths of allegiance of that part of the aristocracy who regarded oaths. But a great obstacle arose : there was no one to crown her. The Archbishop of Canterbury was dead ; Dr. Heath, the Archbishop of York, positively refused to crown her as supreme head of the Church ; there were but five or six Catholic bishops surviving the pestilence, and they all obstinately refused to perform the ceremony, neither would they consecrate any bishops who were of a different way of thinking.

Notwithstanding these signs and symptoms of approaching change, all ceremonies were preparing for celebrating the Christmas festival according to the rites of the ancient Church. It was on the morning of Christmas Day that Elizabeth took the important step of personal secession from the mass. She appeared in her closet in great state, at the celebration of the morning service, surrounded by her ladies and officers. Oglethorpe, Bishop of Carlisle, was at the altar, preparing to officiate at high mass ; but when the gospel was concluded, and every one expected that the queen would have made the usual offering, she rose abruptly, and with her whole retinue withdrew from the closet into her privy chamber, which was strange to divers. "God be blessed for all His gifts !" adds the narrator of this scene. This withdrawal was to signify her disapprobation of the mass ; yet she proceeded softly and gradually, till she ascertained the tone of the new Parliament, which had not yet met. Had her conduct on Christmas morning excited general reprobation, instead of approbation, she could have laid her retreat, and that of her personal attendants, on her sudden indisposition. When she found this step was well received, she took another, which was to issue a proclamation, ordering that from the approaching New Year's Day, the Litany should, with the epistle and gospel, be said in English in her chapel, and in all churches.

The queen and her privy council, having agreed that Sunday, January 15th, would be the most suitable day for her coronation, she likewise appointed the preceding day, Saturday the 14th, for her grand recognition procession through the city of London.

The recognition procession through the city of London was one of peculiar character, marked not by any striking difference of parade or ceremony, but by the constant drama acted between the new queen and the populace. Elizabeth left the Tower about two in the afternoon, seated, royally attired, in a chariot covered with crimson velvet, which had a canopy borne over it by knights, one of whom was her illegitimate brother, Sir John Perrot. "The queen," says George Ferrers, who was an officer in the procession, "as she entered the city, was received by the people with prayers, welcomings, cries, and tender words, and all signs which argue an earnest love of subjects towards their sovereign; and the queen, by holding up her hands and glad countenance to such as stood afar off, and most tender language to those that stood nigh to her grace, showed herself no less thankful to receive the people's goodwill than they to offer it. To all that wished her well she gave thanks. To such as bade 'God save her grace,' she said in return, 'God save you all,' and added, 'that she thanked them with all her heart.'" As she passed through Temple Bar, she said, as a farewell to the populace, "Be ye well assured I will stand your good queen."

The acclamations of the people in reply exceeded the thundering of the ordnance, at that moment shot off from the Tower.

Thus ended this celebrated procession, which certainly gave the tone to Elizabeth's public demeanour, throughout the remainder of her life.

The queen's perplexity regarding the prelate who was to crown her must have continued till the last moment, because, had Dr. Oglethorpe, the Bishop of Carlisle, been earlier prevailed on to perform this ceremony, it is certain proper vestments could have been prepared for him, instead of borrowing

them from Bonner, which was actually done on the spur of the moment. Dr. Oglethorpe was the officiating bishop at the royal chapel; he might therefore consider that he owed more obedience to the sovereign's command than the rest of the Catholic prelates. The compromise appears to have been, that if Elizabeth took the ancient oath administered to her Catholic predecessors, he would set the crown on her head. That she took such oath is universally agreed by historians.

One of the earliest regnal acts of Elizabeth was to send friendly and confidential assurances to the Kings of Denmark and Sweden, and all the Protestant princes of Germany, of her attachment to the reformed faith and her wish to cement a bond of union between all its professors. At the same time, with a view of keeping fair with the Catholic powers of Europe, and obtaining a recognition that would ensure the obedience of her own subjects of that persuasion, she directed Carne, her late sister's resident minister at the Court of Rome, to announce her accession to Pope Paul IV., and to assure him that it was not her intention to offer violence to the consciences of any denomination of her subjects on the score of religion.

The aged pontiff, incensed at the "new doctrine of liberty of conscience" implied in this declaration, and regarding with hostile feelings the offspring of a marriage which had involved the overthrow of the papal power in England, replied "that he was unable to comprehend the hereditary right of one not born in wedlock, that the Queen of Scots claimed the crown, as the nearest legitimate descendant of Henry VII., but that if Elizabeth were willing to submit the controversy to his arbitration, every indulgence should be shown to her which justice would permit." Elizabeth immediately recalled her minister. The pope forbade his return, under peril of excommunication; and Carne, though he talked largely of his loyalty to his royal mistress, remained at Rome till his death. The bull issued by this haughty pontiff, on January 12th, 1558-9, declaring heretical sovereigns incapable of reigning, though Elizabeth's name was not mentioned therein, was supposed to be peculiarly aimed at her; yet it did not deprive her of the allegiance of her Catholic

peers, all of whom paid their liege homage to her, as their undoubted sovereign, at her coronation.

The new sovereign received the flattering submissions of her late persecutors, with a graciousness of demeanour, which proved that the queen had the magnanimity to forgive the injuries, and even the insults, that had been offered to the Princess Elizabeth.

To Sir Henry Bedingsfeld she archly observed, when he came to pay his duty to her at her first Court—"Whenever I have a prisoner who requires to be safely and straitly kept, I shall send him to you." She was wont to tease him by calling him her jailer, when in her mirthful mood, but always treated him as a friend, and honoured him, subsequently, with a visit at his stately mansion, Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk.

Elizabeth strengthened her interest in the Upper House by adding and restoring five Protestant statesmen to the peerage. Henry Carey, her mother's nephew, she created Lord Hunsdon; the Lord Thomas Howard, brother to the Duke of Norfolk, she made Viscount Bindon; Oliver St. John, also a connexion of the Boleyns, Baron of Bletsoe. She restored the brother of Katharine Parr, William, Marquis of Northampton, to the honours he had forfeited in the late reign by espousing the cause of Lady Jane Grey; and also, the son of the late Protector, Somerset, Edward Seymour, to the title of Earl of Hertford.

The morning after her coronation she went to her chapel, it being the custom to release prisoners at the inauguration of a sovereign—perhaps there was some forgotten religious ceremony connected with this act of grace. In her great chamber one of her courtiers presented her with a petition, and before the whole Court, in a loud voice implored "that four or five more prisoners might be released!" On inquiry, he declared them to be "the four evangelists and the Apostle St. Paul, who had been long shut up in an unknown tongue, as it were, in prison, so that they could not converse with the common people."

Elizabeth answered very gravely—"It is best first to inquire of them, whether they approve of being released or not."

The inquiry was soon after made in the convocation appointed

by Parliament, the result of which was, that the apostles *did* approve of their translation. A translation of the Scriptures was immediately published by authority, which, after several revisions, became, in the succeeding reign, the basis of our present version.

Her charge to her judges, given about the same time, is noble in the simplicity of its language. It may be noticed, that when Elizabeth used perspicuous phraseology, in speaking or writing, she was usually sincere.

“Have a care over my people. You have my people—do you that which I ought to do. They are *my* people. Every man oppressth and spoileth them without mercy. They cannot revenge their quarrel, nor help themselves. See unto them—see unto them, for they are my charge. I charge you, even as God hath charged me. I care not for myself; my life is not dear to me. My care is for my people. I pray God, whoever succeedeth me, be as careful as I am. They who know what cares I bear, would not think I took any great joy in wearing a crown.”

“These ears,” added Dr. Jewel, “heard her majesty speak these words.”

The queen rode, in her Parliamentary robes, on January 25th, with all her peers, *spiritual* and temporal, in their robes, to Westminster Abbey, where she attended a somewhat incongruous religious service. High mass was celebrated at the altar before queen, Lords, and Commons: the sermon was preached by Dr. Cox, Edward VI.’s Calvinistic schoolmaster, who had returned from Geneva for the purpose. The queen’s supremacy was debated in this Parliament. Dr. Heath, the Lord Chancellor, who took his seat with the rest of the Catholic bishops, spoke against this measure. Finally, the oath of the queen’s supremacy, as confirmed by Parliament, being tendered to Dr. Heath, Archbishop of York, and the rest of the Catholic bishops, all refused it but Llandaff; they were deprived of their sees, with which the most illustrious of the Protestant divines were endowed.

The learned Dr. Parker, the friend of Anne Boleyn, was appointed by the queen Archbishop of Canterbury. He had

been an exile for conscience' sake in the reign of Queen Mary ; under his auspices the Church of England was established, by authority of this session of Parliament, nearly in its present state ; the common prayer and articles of Edward VI.'s Church being restored with some important modifications ; the translation of the Scriptures in English was likewise restored to the people. Before the House of Commons was dissolved, Sir Thomas Gargrave, their Speaker, craved leave to bring up a petition to her majesty, of vital importance to the realm ; it was to entreat that she would marry, that the country might have her royal issue to reign over them. Elizabeth received the address presented by the Speaker, knights, and burgesses of the Lower House, seated in state in her great gallery at Whitehall Palace.

She paused a short space after listening to the request of the Commons, and then made a long oration in reply ; which George Ferrers, who was present, recorded as near as he could bring it away. But whether the fault rests with the royal oratress or the reporter, this task was not very perspicuously achieved. Toward the conclusion of her speech, she drew from her finger her coronation ring, and, showing it to the Commons, told them that—

"When she received that ring, she had solemnly bound herself in marriage to the realm ; and that it would be quite sufficient for the memorial of her name and for her glory, if, when she died, an inscription were engraved on a marble tomb, saying, 'Here lieth Elizabeth, *which* reigned a virgin, and died a virgin.'"

In conclusion, she dismissed the deputation with these words:—

"I take your coming to me in good part, and give to you eftsoons my hearty thanks, yet more for your good will and good meaning than for your message."

Elizabeth, when she made this declaration, was in the flower of her age, having completed her twenty-fifth year in the preceding September, and according to the description given of her, at the period of her accession to the throne, by Sir Robert Naunton, she must have been possessed of no ordinary personal attractions.

"She was of person tall, of hair and complexion fair, and therewithal well favoured, but high nosed ; of limb and feature neat, and, which added to the lustre of these external graces, of a stately and majestic comportment, participating more of her father than of her mother, who was of an inferior allay—plausible, or, as the French have it, *debonnair* and affable—which, descending as hereditary to the daughter, did render her of a more sweet temper, and endeared her to the love of the people."

She had already refused the proffered hand of her sister's widower, Philip II. of Spain, who had pressed his suit with earnestness amounting to importunity, animated by the desire of regaining, with another regal English bride, a counter-balance to the allied powers of France and Scotland. It has also been asserted that the Spanish monarch had conceived a passion for Elizabeth during the life of her sister, which rendered his suit more lively ; and assuredly he must have commenced his overtures before his deceased consort's obsequies were celebrated, in his eagerness to gain the start of other candidates. Elizabeth always attributed his political hostility to his personal pique at her declining to become his wife.

Yet she had a difficult and a delicate game to play, for the friendship of Spain appeared to be her only bulwark against the combined forces of France and Scotland. She had succeeded to an empty exchequer, a realm dispirited by the loss of Calais, burdened with debt, embarrassed with a base coinage, and a starving population ready to break into a civil war, under the pretext of deciding the strength of rival creeds by the sword. Moreover, her title to the throne had been already impugned, by the King of France compelling his youthful daughter-in-law, the Queen of Scots, then in her sixteenth year, and entirely under his control, to assume the arms and regal style of England.

If Elizabeth had shared the feminine propensity of leaning on others for succour, in the time of danger, she would probably have accepted inglorious protection, with the nuptial ring of Philip, but she partook not of the nature of the ivy, but the

oak, being formed and fitted to stand alone, and she met the crisis bravely. She was new to the cares of Empire, but the study of history had given her experience and knowledge in the regnal science, beyond what can be acquired, during years of personal attempts at governing, by monarchs who have wasted their youthful energies in the pursuit of pleasure or mere finger-end accomplishments. The chart by which she steered was marked with the rocks, the quicksands, and the shoals on which the barks of other princes had been wrecked ; and she knew that, of all the false beacons that had allured the feeble-minded to disgrace and ruin, the expedient of calling in foreign aid, in seasons of national distress, was the most fatal. She knew the English character, and she had seen the evils and discontents that had sprung from her sister's Spanish marriage, and in her own case these would have been aggravated by the invalidation of her title to the throne. She therefore firmly, but courteously, declined the proposal, under the plea of scruples of conscience, which were to her insuperable. This refusal preceded her coronation, for the Spanish ambassador, Count de Feria, in consequence of the slight which he conceived had been put upon his master, by the maiden monarch declining the third reversion of his hand, feigned sickness as an excuse for not assisting at that ceremonial.

The next month Philip pledged himself to the beautiful Elizabeth of France—a perilous alliance for Elizabeth of England ; it rendered Philip of Spain and the husband of Mary Queen of Scots, the formidable rival of her title, brothers-in-law.

Elizabeth's first care was to procure an Act, for the recognition and declaring of her own title, from her Parliament, which was unanimously passed, and without any allusion to her mother's marriage, or the stigma that had previously been put on her own birth. The statute declares her to be "rightly, lineally, and lawfully descended from the blood royal," and pronounces "all sentences and Acts of Parliament derogatory to this declaration to be void."

Notwithstanding the danger of her position, from the probable coalition of the powers of Catholic Europe against her, she

stood undaunted, and, though aware of the difficulty of maintaining a war, with such resources as she possessed, she assumed as high a tone, for the honour of England, as the mightiest of her predecessors, during the conferences at Château Cambresis, for the arrangement of a general treaty of pacification, and, declining the offered mediation of Philip II., she chose to treat alone. She demanded the restoration of Calais, as the prominent article, and that in so bold and persevering a manner that it was guaranteed to her, at the expiration of eight years, by the King of France, under a penalty of 500,000 crowns. With a view to the satisfaction of her subjects, she caused Lord Wentworth, the last Lord Deputy of Calais, and others of the late commanders there, to be arraigned, for the loss of a place more dear than profitable to England, and also to show how firmly the reins of Empire could be grasped in the hand of a maiden monarch. Wentworth was acquitted by his peers, the others were found guilty and condemned, but the sentence was never carried into execution.

By showing herself freely and condescendingly to her people, she made herself dear and acceptable unto them. Well, indeed, had nature qualified Elizabeth to play her part, with *éclat*, in the imposing drama of royalty, by the endowments of wit, eloquence, penetration, and self-possession, joined to the advantages of commanding features and a majestic presence. She had, from childhood upwards, studied the art of courting popularity, and perfectly understood how to please the great body of the people. The honest-hearted mechanical classes, won by the frank manner in which she dispensed the cheap, but dearly prized favours of gracious words and smiles, regarded her with feelings approaching to idolatry; and as for the younger nobles and gentlemen of England, who attended her Court, they were, almost to a man, eager for the opportunity of risking their lives in her service; and she knew how to improve the love and loyalty of all ranks of her subjects, to the advancement of her power and the defence of her realm.

The pecuniary aids granted by her first Parliament to Queen Elizabeth, though only proportioned to the extreme necessity of

the Crown at that period, were enormous, for, besides the tenths, first fruits, and impropriations of Church property, which had been declined by Mary, and the grant of tonnage and poundage for life, they voted a subsidy of two and eightpence in the pound on all movable goods, and four shillings on land, to be paid in two several payments. How such a property tax was ever gathered, after a year of famine and pestilence, must indeed appear a marvel to those who witness the irritation and inconvenience caused to the needy portion of the middle classes by the infliction of a comparatively trivial impost at present. It is always easy to convince the wealthy of the expediency of sacrificing a part to save the whole; therefore, Elizabeth and her acute Premier, Cecil, laid a heavier burden on the lords of the soil, and those who derived their living from ecclesiastical property, than on those whose possessions were limited to personals, which at that time were chiefly the mercantile and mechanical classes.

In a letter of April 14th, that eminent reformer, Jewel, laments that the queen continued the celebration of mass in her private chapel. It was not till May 12th that the service was changed, and the use of Latin discontinued. "The queen," observes Jewel, "declines being styled the head of the Church, at which I certainly am not much displeased." Elizabeth assumed the title of Governess of the Church, but she finally asserted her supremacy, in a scarcely less authoritative manner than her father had done, and many Catholics were put to death for denying it.

Touching the suitors for Elizabeth's hand, Jewel tells his Zurich correspondent "that nothing is yet talked about the queen's marriage, yet there are now courting her the King of Sweden, the Saxon (son of John Frederic, Duke of Saxony), and Charles, the son of the Emperor Ferdinand, to say nothing of the Englishman, Sir William Pickering. I know, however, what I should prefer; but matters of this kind, as you are aware, are rather mysterious, and we have a common proverb, that marriages are made in heaven." In another letter, dated May 22nd, 1559, he says that "public opinion inclines towards

Sir William Pickering, a wise and religious man, and highly gifted as to personal qualities."

Jewel is the first person who mentions Pickering among the aspirants for the hand of Queen Elizabeth. He had been employed on diplomatic missions to Germany and France, with some credit to himself, and the queen bestowed so many marks of attention upon him, that the Spanish ambassador, as well as our good bishop and others, fancied that he had as fair a chance of success as the sons of reigning princes. He is also mentioned by Camden "as a gentleman of moderate fortune, but comely person." It is possible that Pickering had performed some secret service for Elizabeth, in the season of her distress, which entitled him to the delusive honour of her smiles, as there is undoubtedly some mystery in the circumstance of a man, scarcely of equestrian rank, encouraging hopes so much above his condition. Be this as it may, he quickly vanished from the scene, and was forgotten.

On May 23rd, a splendid embassy from France, headed by the Duke de Montmorenci, arrived for the purpose of receiving the queen's ratification of the treaty of Cambresis. But while Elizabeth appeared to enter into the gay scenes of festive pageantry by which the occasion was graced, with all the zest of a young, sprightly, and handsome woman, who, emerging suddenly from restraint, retirement, and neglect, finds herself the delight of every eye and the idol of all hearts, her mind was intent on matters of high import, and she knew that the flowers with which her path was strewn concealed many a dangerous quicksand from those who looked not below the surface. Within one little month of the solemn ratification of the treaty, by the plenipotentiaries of France in her Court, her right to the crown she wore had been boldly impugned by Henry II.'s principal Minister of State, the Constable de Montmorenci, who, when the Duke de Nemours, a prince nearly allied to the throne of France, informed him of his intention of seeking the Queen of England in marriage, exclaimed—"Do you not know that the queen-dolphin has right and title to England?" A public demonstration of this claim was made at the jousts in honour of the

espousals of the French king's sister with the Duke of Savoy, Elizabeth's oft-rejected suitor, when the Scotch heralds displayed the escutcheon of their royal mistress, the Queen of Scots, quartered with those of France and England, which was afterwards protested against by the English ambassador Throckmorton.

The mighty plan of uniting the Gallic and Britannic empires beneath the sceptres of Francis of Valois and Mary of Scotland, had never ceased to occupy the attention of Henry II., from the death of Edward VI. till his own course was suddenly cut short by the accidental wound he received, from a splinter of his opponent's lance, while tilting in honour of his daughter's nuptials. That event produced an important change in the fortunes of England's Elizabeth. She was at once delivered from the most dangerous and insidious of her foes, and the consequences of the formidable alliance between France and Spain ; for although the rival claims of his consort to the throne of England were asserted by Francis II., he was a sickly youth, inheriting neither the talents nor the judgment of his father. The nominal power of France and Scotland both passed into the hands of Mary Stuart's uncles, the Princes of Lorraine and Guise ; but the rival factions, both political and religious, by which they were opposed and impeded on every side, deprived them of the means of injuring Elizabeth, who, on her part, actively employed agents, as numerous as the arms of Briarius, in sowing the seeds of discord, and nursing every root of bitterness, that sprang up in those unhappy realms. The fulminations of John Knox against female government had incited the reformed party to resist the authority of the queen-dowager, Mary of Lorraine, to whom the regent Arran had, in 1555, reluctantly resigned his office. The queen-regent, after an ill-judged, fruitless struggle to crush the progress of the Reformation, summoned the Earl of Arran, who had recently accepted the French Dukedom of Chatelherault, to her aid, as the most powerful peer in Scotland, and the next in succession to the throne, on which, in fact, he had, from the first, cast a longing regard. He was the head of the potent house of Hamilton, but

his designs had been checked by the rival faction of the Earl of Lennox, and subsequently by the more popular and able party of the young queen's illegitimate brother, the Earl of Murray; and now, although he gave his lukewarm succour to the queen-regent in her need, he suffered himself to be deluded by the English Cabinet, with the idea that the crown might be transferred from the brows of his absentee sovereign to his own, or rather, to those of his heir, the Earl of Arran, to whom Queen Elizabeth had been offered in her childhood by her father, Henry VIII.

There is every reason to believe that Cecil seriously meditated uniting the island crowns by a marriage between his royal mistress and young Arran, if the Hamilton party in Scotland had succeeded in deposing Queen Mary, and placing him on the throne. The young earl, who had been colonel of the Scotch Guards at Paris, had, in anticipation of a more brilliant destiny, embraced the reformed religion, and, as it was supposed, at the suggestion and with the aid of Throckmorton, Elizabeth's ambassador at Paris, absconded from the French service; and after visiting Geneva, to arrange his plans with the leaders of that Church, he came privately to England. The secret and confidential conference which he held with Queen Elizabeth, on August 6th, must have taken place at the ancient palace at Eltham, where she arrived on the preceding day. Arran was young and handsome, but weak-minded; at times, indeed, subject to the direful malady which clouded the mental perceptions of his father and brothers, just the subject for the royal coquette, and her wily premier, to render a ready tool in any scheme connected with hopes of aggrandizement for himself.

As the plan and limits of this work will not admit of launching into the broad stream of general history, the events of the Scotch campaign, which commenced with Elizabeth sending an army and a fleet to aid the insurgent lords of the congregation in defending themselves against the French forces, called in by the queen-regent, and ended by giving her a predominant power in the councils of that distracted realm, cannot be detailed here. The MSS. in the State Paper Office attest the fact that the Lord James, Mary's illegitimate brother, (afterwards so

celebrated as the regent Murray,) and the principal leaders of the popular party, were the pensioners of Elizabeth. The treaty of Edinburgh was framed according to her interest, and proved, of course, unsatisfactory to the Queen of Scots and her consort.

The congregational Parliament had dispatched a solemn embassy to Elizabeth, consisting of Lethington and the Earls of Morton and Glencairn, to entreat her to join in marriage with the Earl of Arran. It was not in Elizabeth's nature to return an immediate or direct answer, in any matter of State policy, especially if involving a proposal of marriage. The unexpected death of the royal husband of the Queen of Scots probably hastened Elizabeth's decision with regard to her Scottish suitor, and she declined the offer in terms of courtesy; thanking the nobles at the same time for their goodwill, "in offering her the choicest person they had." Arran immediately afterwards became, as doubtless Elizabeth was aware he would, the suitor of his own fair sovereign, the widowed Mary Stuart.

It will now be necessary to return to the chronological order of the personal history of Elizabeth, which we have a little antedated, in putting the reader in possession of the result of the Earl of Arran's courtship. The queen had many wooers in the interim, both among foreign princes and her own subjects. Of these, Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, claims the first mention as the foremost in rank and consequence. He was the premier Earl of England, and at that time there was but one peer of the ducal order, his son-in-law, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. As the last male of the illustrious house of Fitzalan, he boasted the blood of the Plantagenets and of the ancient royal line of Charlemagne and St. Louis, and he was nearly allied in blood to the queen as a descendant of Woodville, Earl of Rivers; his possessions were proportioned to his high rank and proud descent. He had been materially instrumental in placing the crown on the head of the rightful heiress, Queen Mary, at the time of the brief usurpation of the hapless Lady Jane Grey; and though his ardent loyalty to the late queen and his zeal for the old religion had induced him at first to take part against Elizabeth, at the time of the Wyatt rebellion,

we have shown how soon his manly heart revolted in her favour, and that she was in all probability indebted to his powerful protection for the preservation of her life from the malignant and lawless practices of Gardiner and his party. Of all the lovers of Elizabeth, his attachment was probably the most sincere, as it commenced in the season of persecution. He now, as lord steward of the royal household, enjoyed many opportunities of preferring his suit, and, albeit the maiden majesty of England had no intention of becoming the third wife of one of her subjects, old enough to be her father, she gave him sufficient encouragement to excite the jealousy of the other courtiers. By feeding his hopes, she obtained his vote and influence in the council and senate, whenever she had a point to carry, even with regard to the peaceful establishment of the reformed Church. The royal weapon of coquetry was also exercised, though in a playful and gracious manner, towards her former cruel foe Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, the Lord Treasurer, by whom she was splendidly entertained, at his house at Basing, soon after her accession to the throne ; at her departure, her majesty merrily bemoaned herself that he was so old, "for else, by my troth," said she, "if my Lord Treasurer were but a young man, I could find it in my heart to have him for my husband before any man in England."

When the announcement of the marriage of her former suitor, Philip II., with her fair namesake of France was made to Elizabeth, she pretended to feel mortified, and complained to the ambassador of the inconstancy of his master, "who could not," she said, "wait four short months to see if she would change her mind."

The person, however, who held the most conspicuous place in her majesty's favour, and through whose hands the chief preferments and patronage of her Government flowed, was Lord Robert Dudley, at that period a married man. He was born in the same auspicious hour with the queen, with whom his destiny became inseparably connected from the time they were both prisoners in the Tower. From the first month of her accession to the throne, Elizabeth, so remarkable for her frugal distribution

of rewards and honours, showered wealth and distinctions on him. She conferred the office of Master of the Horse on him, in the first instance, with the fee of 100 marks per annum, and the lucrative employment of head commissioner for compounding the fines of such as were desirous of declining the order of knighthood, and he was soon after invested with the Garter, and made Constable of Windsor Castle and Forest, and Keeper of the Great Park during life. His wife, Amy Robsart, a wealthy heiress, whom he had wedded with great pomp and publicity during the reign of Edward VI., was not allowed by him to appear among the noble matronage of Elizabeth's Court, lest she should mar the sunshine of his favour, by reminding his royal mistress of the existence of so inconvenient a personage. Elizabeth's undisguised partiality for the handsome Dudley excited the jealousy of the other members of her council, and even the politic Cecil could not forbear hazarding a biting jest to Elizabeth on the subject, when he told her of the misalliance of her cousin Frances, Duchess of Suffolk, with her equerry, Adrian Stokes. "What!" exclaimed her majesty, "has she married her horse-keeper?" "Yea, madam," replied the premier, "and she says you would like to do the same with yours."

Cecil's innuendo was undoubtedly meant to warn the queen that her intimacy with Dudley was likely to prove injurious to her reputation, and derogatory to the dignity of the Crown. Sir Thomas Chaloner, her majesty's representative at the Court of Spain, had, in a private postscript to one of his despatches, addressed the premier on this delicate subject, expressing the vexation he, as an attached servant of the queen, felt at the impediment such reports were likely to cause in her majesty's marriage, to the detriment of her whole realm, ministering matter for lewd tongues to descant upon, and breeding contempt. All this, he stated, was written in strict confidence to his friend Cecil, and entreated him to keep it to himself. He then alluded to an overture of marriage which had been made to the queen by the King of Spain, in behalf of his cousin, the Archduke Charles, the Emperor Ferdinand's second son, a prince of noble qualities and stainless reputation.

The suit of this accomplished prince was afterwards preferred in due form to Elizabeth, by Count Elphinstone, the emperor's ambassador, and she protested openly that, of all the illustrious marriages that had been offered to her, there was not one greater, or that she affected more, than that of the Archduke Charles, and expressed a desire to see him in England. It was generally expected that the prince would come under an assumed character, to visit the Court of England, and obtain a first sight of his royal lady by stealth, but this chivalric project, well worthy of the poetic age which gave birth to Spenser, Shakespeare, and Sir Philip Sidney, was never carried into effect. The differences as to their jarring creeds, as Elizabeth demanded conformity to the Protestant form of worship, appeared insuperable, and for a time put an end to the negotiations, though they were subsequently renewed, as will be related in due course.

Meantime the suit of a royal candidate, of the reformed religion, for her hand was renewed by the King of Sweden, in behalf of his heir, Prince Eric. The ambassador chosen to plead his cause was John, Duke of Finland, the second son of the Swedish monarch, a prince of singular talents and address, and possessed of great personal attractions. On September 27th this distinguished envoy landed at Harwich; and on October 5th he was met and welcomed at Colchester, in the name of the queen, by the Earl of Oxford and Lord Robert Dudley, by whom he was conducted to London. At the corner of Gracechurch Street, Leadenhall, he was received by the Marquis of Northampton, Lord Ambrose Dudley, and a fair company of ladies, as well as gentlemen, in rich array, with the escort of one hundred yeomen on horseback, with trumpets sounding. He proceeded over London Bridge to the Bishop of Winchester's palace, which was appointed for his abode, it being the custom, in the "good old times," to quarter any foreigner of distinguished rank, and his train, on some wealthy noble or prelate, for board and entertainment.

Seven days after, the Prince of Sweden came by water to the Court, with his guard, and was honourably received by

many noble personages at the hall door, where the guard stood, in their rich coats, in a line which extended to the presence chamber, where the queen received him with the honours due to a royal visitor, and welcomed him with great cordiality. Whenever he went in state to Court he threw handfuls of money among the populace, saying, "*He* gave silver, but his brother would give gold."

"The Swede, and Charles, the son of the emperor," observes Bishop Jewel, "are courting at a most marvellous rate. But the Swede is most in earnest, for he promises mountains of silver in case of success. The lady, however, is probably thinking of an alliance nearer home."

Before Elizabeth had given any decided answer touching the Swedish match, the aged King Gustavus died, and her suitor Eric succeeded to the throne of that realm, and having become jealous of his brother, whom he suspected, not without reason, perhaps, of playing the wooer on his own account, he recalled him, and sent an ambassador to renew the matrimonial negotiations in his name. The arrival of the new plenipotentiary, Nicholas Guildenstiern, caused great excitement among the Londoners, for it was reported that he had brought two ships laden with treasure as presents for the queen. Eighteen large pied horses and several chests of bullion, it seems, were actually presented to her majesty, in the name of her royal wooer, with an intimation "that he would quickly follow in person, to lay his heart at her feet." This announcement caused a little prudish perplexity to Elizabeth and her council, about the manner in which the King of Sweden should be received on his arrival in the palace, "the queen's majesty being a maid." As Eric was the handsomest man in Europe, if he had come in person it is possible that, with Elizabeth's admiration for beauty, the result might have been different, but she was not to be won by proxy courtship.

About the same time Elizabeth's old preceptor, Roger Ascham, whom she had continued in the post of Latin secretary, and occasionally made her counsellor on matters of greater importance than the niceties of the learned languages,

informs his friend Sturmius that he had shown her majesty a passage in one of his letters relating to the Scotch affairs, and another on the interesting subject of her marriage—Sturmius, it seems, having undertaken, through the medium of the Latin secretary, to advocate the suit of Eric, King of Sweden, to the regal spinster. “The queen read, remarked, and graciously acknowledged in both of them,” writes Ascham, “your respectful observance of her. Your judgment in the affairs of Scotland, as they then stood, she highly approved, and she loves you for your solicitude respecting us and our concerns. The part respecting her marriage she read over thrice, as I well remember, and with somewhat of a gentle smile, but still preserving a modest and bashful silence. Concerning that point, indeed, my dear Sturmius,” pursues he, “I have nothing certain to write to you, nor does any one truly know what to judge. I told you rightly in one of my former letters, that in the whole ordinance of her life she resembled not Phædra, but Hippolyta, for by nature, and not by the counsels of others, she is thus averse and abstinent from marriage. When I know anything for certain, I will write it to you as soon as possible; in the meantime, I have no hopes to give you respecting the King of Sweden.”

While Elizabeth was yet amusing herself with the addresses of the royal Swedes—for there can be little doubt that Eric's jealousy of the brother, who finally deprived him of his crown, was well founded, with regard to his attempts to supplant him in the good graces of the English queen—the King of Denmark sent his nephew, Adolphus, Duke of Holstein, to try his fortune with the illustrious spinster. He was young, handsome, valiant, and accomplished, and in love with the queen, but though one of the busy-bodies of the Court wrote to her ambassador in Paris, “that it was whispered her majesty was very fond of him,” he was rejected like the rest of her princely wooers; she, however, treated him with great distinction, made him a Knight of the Garter, and pensioned him for life. “The Duke of Holstein has returned home,” says Jewel, “after a magnificent reception by us, with splendid presents from the queen, having been

elected into the Order of the Garter, and invested with its golden and jewelled badge. The Swede is reported to be always coming, and even now to be on his voyage, and on the eve of landing ; but as far as I can judge he will not stir a foot."

Elizabeth, it appears, thought otherwise, for it is recorded by that pleasant gossip, Allen, in a letter written from the Court, that her majesty was, in the month of September, in hourly expectation of the arrival of her royal suitor, and that certain works were in hand in anticipation of his arrival at Westminster, at which the workmen laboured day and night, in order to complete the preparations for his reception. After all, Eric never came, having reason to believe that his visit would be fruitless ; and he finally consoled himself for his failure in obtaining the most splendid match in Europe by marrying one of his own subjects

The death of the favourite's wife at this critical juncture, under peculiar and suspicious circumstances, gave rise to dark and mysterious rumours that she had been put out of the way to enable him to accept the willing hand of a royal bride. Lever, one of the popular preachers of the day, exhorted Cecil and Knollys to investigate the matter, because "of the grievous and dangerous suspicion and muttering of the death of her that was the wife of my Lord Robert Dudley." Some contradictory statements as to the manner in which the mischance (as it was called) happened to the unfortunate lady were offered by the sprightly widower and the persons in whose care, or rather we should say in whose custody, the deserted wife of his youth was kept at Cumnor Hall, in Berkshire, and it was declared by the authorities to whom the depositions were made that her death was accidental. So little satisfactory was the explanation, that even the cautious Cecil expressed his opinion "that Dudley was infamed by the death of his wife." Throckmorton, the English ambassador at Paris, was so thoroughly mortified at the light in which this affair was regarded on the Continent, that he wrote to Cecil, "The bruits be so *brim* and so maliciously reported here, touching the marriage of the Lord Robert and the death of his wife, that I know not where to turn me nor what

countenance to bear." In England it was generally believed that the queen was under promise of marriage to Dudley, and though all murmured, no one presumed to remonstrate with her majesty on the subject. Parry, the unprincipled confidant of the Lord Admiral Seymour's clandestine courtship of his royal mistress, and whom she had, on her accession to the throne, made a privy councillor, and preferred, though a convicted defaulter, to the honourable and lucrative office of comptroller of her household, openly flattered the favourite's pretensions, who now began to be distinguished in the Court by the significant title of "my lord," without any reference to his name, while daily new gifts and immunities were lavished on him. Meantime the jealous rivalry of the Earl of Arundel led to open brawls in the Court; and as the quarrel was warmly taken up by the servants and followers of these nobles, her majesty's name was bandied about among them in a manner degrading, not only to the honour of royalty, but to feminine delicacy.

Elizabeth passed the matter over with apparent nonchalance, and when Thockmorton, annoyed past endurance at the sneers of his diplomatic brethren in Paris, took the bold step of sending his secretary, Jones, to acquaint her majesty, privately, with the injurious reports that were circulated touching herself and Dudley, she received the communication without evincing any of that acute sensibility to female honour which teaches most women to regard a stain as a wound. She sometimes laughed, perhaps, at the absurdity of these *ou dits*, and occasionally covered her face with her hands; and when the secretary, who had been charged with this delicate commission, brought his communication to a close, she informed him "that he had come on an unnecessary errand, for she was already acquainted with all he had told her; and that she was convinced of the innocence of Lord Robert Dudley of the death of his wife, as he was in her own Court at the time it happened, which had so fallen out that neither his honour nor his honesty were touched therein."

Notwithstanding the honest warning of Throckmorton to his royal mistress, the favourite continued in close attendance

on her person. It is related that one of his political rivals, who is generally supposed to have been Sussex, gave him a blow at the council board, in presence of the queen. Elizabeth, who was well fitted to rule the stormy elements over which she presided, told the pugnacious statesman that he had forfeited his hand, in reference to the law which imposed that penalty on any one who presumed to violate the sanctity of the Court by the commission of such an outrage. On which Dudley rejoined, "that he hoped her majesty would suspend that sentence till the traitor had lost his head," and the matter went no further.

In May, 1560, the new pope, Pius IV., a prince of the house of Medici, made an attempt to win back England, through her queen, to the obedience of the Roman see, by sending Parpaglia, Abbot of St. Saviour, to the queen, with letters written in the most conciliatory style, and beginning, "Dear daughter in Christ," inviting her "to return into the bosom of the Church," and professing his readiness to do all things needful for the health of her soul, and the firm establishment of her royal dignity, and requesting her to give due attention to the matters which would be communicated by his dear son Vincent Parpaglia. What the papal concessions were, on which this spiritual treaty was to be based, can only be matter of conjecture, for Elizabeth declined receiving the nuncio, and the separation became final and complete.

In the autumn of the same year Elizabeth's great and glorious measure of restoring the English currency to sterling value was carried into effect. "A matter, indeed, weighty and great," says Camden, "which neither Edward VI. could, nor Mary durst attempt, since Henry VIII. was the first king that ever caused copper to be mingled with silver, to the great disgrace of the kingdom, damage of his successors and people, and a notable token of his excessive expense, since his father had left him more wealth than any other king ever left his successors, and likewise he had drawn abundance of money by the means of tribute and imposts, besides all the revenues, gifts, and goods belonging to the monasteries."

This mighty and beneficial change, was effected by the

enlightened policy of Elizabeth, without causing the slightest inconvenience or distress to individuals. The old money was called in, and every person received the nominal value of the base coin, in new sterling money, and the Government bore the loss, which was, of course, very heavy, but the people were satisfied, and their confidence in the good faith and honour of the Crown richly repaid this great sovereign for the sacrifice. She strictly forbade melting or trafficking with the coin in any way—a precaution the more necessary, inasmuch as the silver was better and purer in England, during her reign, than in full two hundred years before, and than any that was used in any other nation of Europe in her own time.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties with which she had to contend on her accession to the throne, Elizabeth very early assumed the proud position of protectress of the reformed Church, not only in England, but throughout the world. She supplied the Huguenot leaders in France privately with arms and money, and afterwards openly with a military force, under the command of Lord Robert Dudley's eldest brother, the Earl of Warwick. She also extended her succour, secretly, to the Flemish Protestants, and excited them to resist the oppression of their Spanish rulers. The reformed party in Scotland were in her pay, and subservient to her will, although her dislike to John Knox was unconquerable, having been provoked by his abuse of the English Liturgy, in the first place, and in the second, by his work entitled, *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment* (meaning government) *of Women*. It is true that this fulmination was published during her sister's reign, and was more especially aimed against the queen-regent of Scotland and her daughter, the youthful sovereign of that realm, but Elizabeth considered that the honour of the whole sex was touched in his book, and that all female monarchs were insulted and aggrieved by it. It was in vain that he endeavoured, by personal flattery to herself, to excuse his attack upon the folly and incapacity of womankind in general. He assured her "that she was an exception to the sweeping rule he had laid down, that her whole life had been a miracle, which proved that she

had been chosen by God, that the office which was unlawful to other women was lawful to her, and that he was ready to obey her authority;" but the queen was nauseated with the insincerity of adulation from such a quarter, and notwithstanding the persuasions of Cecil and Throckmorton, refused to permit him to set a foot in England on any pretence.

On paying a visit to Ipswich in August, 1561, she found great fault with the clergy for not wearing the surplice, and the general want of order observed in the celebration of divine service. The Bishop of Norwich, himself, came in for a share of the censure of the royal Governess of the Church, for his remissness, and for winking at schismatics. Above all, she expressed her dislike of the marriage of the clergy, and that in cathedrals and colleges there were so many wives and children, which she said was "contrary to the intention of the founders, and much tending to the interruption of the studies of those who were placed there." She even proceeded to issue an order, on August 9th, addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his province, and to the Archbishop of York for his, forbidding the resort of women to the lodgings of cathedrals or colleges on any pretence. Her indignation at the marriage of her bishops carried her almost beyond the bounds of delicacy, and when Archbishop Parker remonstrated with her on what he called the "Popish tendency," of a prohibition which was peculiarly offensive to him as a married man, she told him "she repented of having made any married bishops," and even spoke with contempt of the institution of matrimony altogether. It is well known that the first time the queen honoured the archiepiscopal palace with a visit—on which occasion an enormous expense, and immense trouble and fatigue, had been incurred by the primate and his wife—instead of the gracious words of acknowledgment, which the latter naturally expected to receive at parting from the royal guest, her majesty repaid her dutiful attention with the following insult:—"And you," said she, "madam I may not call you, mistress I am ashamed to call you, and so I know not what to call you; but, howsoever, I thank you."

During her majesty's sojourn at Ipswich, the Court was thrown into the greatest consternation by the discovery that the Lady Katharine Grey, sister to the unfortunate Lady Jane, was on the point of becoming a mother, having contracted a clandestine marriage with Edward, Earl of Hertford, the eldest son of the late Protector Somerset. The matter was the more serious because the young lady was not only of the blood royal, but, as the eldest surviving daughter of Frances Brandon, to whose posterity the regal succession stood entailed by the will of Henry VIII., was regarded by the party opposed to the hereditary claim of Mary Queen of Scots as the heiress-presumptive to the throne. Lady Katharine held an office in the queen's chamber, which kept her in constant attendance on her majesty's person, but having listened to the secret addresses of the man of her heart, love inspired her with ingenuity to elude the watchfulness of the Court. One day, excusing herself, under pretence of sickness, from attending her royal mistress to the chase, she employed the time, not like her accomplished sister, the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, in reading Plato, but in hastening with Lady Jane Seymour, one of the maids-of-honour, the sister of her lover, to his house, where Lady Jane Seymour herself procured the priest who joined their hands in marriage. Hertford left England the next day, Lady Jane Seymour died in the following March, and thus poor Lady Katharine was left to meet the consequences of her stolen nuptials. The queen, forgetful of her own love passages, when princess, with the late lord admiral, uncle to this very Hertford, and the disgraceful disclosures which had been made in King Edward's privy council, scarce ten years ago, treated the unfortunate couple with the greatest severity. Her premier, Cecil, whose cold heart appears at all times inaccessible to the tender impulses of sympathy for beauty in distress, in a letter to the Earl of Sussex sums up the leading circumstances, as far as they had then proceeded, in this piteous romance of royal history, in the following laconic terms: "The 10th of this, at Ipswich, was a great mishap discovered." After naming the situation of the unfortunate Lady Katharine in the coarsest language, he adds, "as she saith, by the Earl of Hertford, who is

in France. She is committed to the Tower: he is sent for. She saith that she was married to him secretly before Christmas last."

The reader will remember that the father of the husband of Lady Katharine Grey was the first great patron of this climbing statesman, and herself the sister of the illustrious victim whom he had acknowledged as his sovereign. "The queen's majesty," pursues he, "doth well, thanked be God, although not well quieted with the mishap of the Lady Katharine." It was in vain that the unfortunate sister of Lady Jane Grey, in her terror and distress, fled to the chamber of the brother of Lord Guildford Dudley, Lord Robert, and implored him to use his powerful intercession with their royal mistress in her behalf. The politic courtier cared not to remind the queen of his family connexion with those who had endeavoured to supplant her in the royal succession; and Lady Katharine was hurried to the Tower, where she brought forth a fair young son. Her husband, on his return, was also incarcerated in the Tower. They were in separate prison lodgings, but he found means to visit his wedded love in her affliction. She became the mother of another child, for which offence he was fined in the Star Chamber £20,000, the marriage having been declared null and void, as the sister of Hertford, Lady Jane, the only efficient witness, was no more. Elizabeth was obdurate in her resentment to her unfortunate cousin; and, disregarding all her pathetic letters for pardon and pity, kept her in durance apart from her husband and children, till she was released by death, after seven years of doleful captivity. Her real crime was being the sister of Lady Jane Grey, which Queen Mary had overlooked, but Elizabeth could not; yet Lady Katharine was a Protestant.

In the same year, 1561, the widowed Queen of Scots, after the death of her consort, Francis II. of France, sent her French minister, D'Oisell, to ask Elizabeth for a safe conduct to pass into Scotland, either by sea, or, if compelled by indisposition or danger, to land in England, and travel without let or hindrance to her own realm.

It had been considered the height of inhumanity in that

brutal monarch, Henry VIII., when he denied a like request, which had been proposed to him in behalf of the bride of his nephew James V., the beautiful Mary of Lorraine, whom he had passionately desired for his own wife ; but that one lady should refuse so small an accommodation to another, had certainly not been anticipated. Elizabeth, however, acted like the true daughter of Henry VIII. on this occasion, for, though D'Oisell presented the Queen of Scotland's request in writing, she delivered her answer to him in the negative at a crowded Court, with a loud voice and angry countenance, observing, "that the Queen of Scots should ask no favour till she had ratified the Treaty of Edinburgh."

When this discourtesy was reported to the youthful sovereign of Scotland, and Dowager of France, then only in her nineteenth year, she sent for the English ambassador, Throckmorton ; and having, in the first place, to mark her own attention to the conventional forms observed, even by hostile princes, in their personal relations towards each other, waved her hand as a signal to the company to withdraw out of hearing, she addressed to him a truly queenly comment on the insult that had been offered to her on the part of his royal mistress.

"My lord ambassador," said she, "as I know not how far I may be transported by passion, I like not to have so many witnesses of mine infirmity as the queen your mistress had, when she talked, not long since, with Monsieur D'Oisell. There is nothing that doth more grieve me than that I did so forget myself as to have asked of her a favour which I could well have done without. I came here, in defiance of the attempts made by her brother Edward to prevent me, and, by the grace of God, I will return without her leave. It is well known that I have friends and allies who have power to assist me, but I chose rather to be indebted to her friendship. If she choose, she may have me for a loving kinswoman and useful neighbour ; for I am not going to practise against her with her subjects, as she has done with mine, yet I know there be in her realm those that like not of the present state of things. The queen says I am young, and lack experience : I confess I am younger than she is, yet I know

how to carry myself lovingly and justly with my friends, and not to cast any word against her, which may be unworthy of a queen and a kinswoman ; and, by her permission, I am as much a queen as herself, and can carry my courage as high as she knows how to do. She hath heretofore assisted my subjects against me ; and now that I am a widow, it may be thought strange that she would hinder me in returning to my own country." Mary, then, in a few words stated that the late king, her husband, had objected to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh ; that while he lived she was bound to act by his advice ; and now her uncles had referred her to her own council, and the states of Scotland, for advice in a matter in which they, as peers of France, had no voice ; and she was too young and inexperienced to decide of herself, even if it had been proper that she should do so.

Throckmorton, in reply, adverted to the old offence of Mary and her late husband, having assumed the title and arms of England. "But," rejoined the young queen, with great *naïveté*, "my late lord and father King Henry, and the king my late lord and husband, would have it so. I was then under their commandment, as you know, and since their death I have neither borne the arms nor used the style of England."

The attempt of Elizabeth to intercept and capture the youthful widow, on her voyage to Scotland, has been contested by some able writers of the present day ; but it is certain that the traitors, Lethington and Murray, counselled the English Cabinet to that step. An English squadron was, at this critical juncture, sent into the North Sea, under pretext of protecting the fishers from pirates ; and Cecil, in his letter to Sussex, after stating the fact, significantly observes, "*I think they will be sorry to see her pass.*" The royal voyager passed the English ships in safety, under the cover of the thick fog ; but they captured one vessel, in which was the young Earl of Eglinton, and carried him into an English port. On finding their mistake, they relinquished the prize ; and apologised for the blunder they had committed. Safe conduct having been peremptorily denied to Mary by Elizabeth, it was impossible for her to place any other con-

struction on the seizure of one of her convoy than the very natural one she did. Elizabeth, however, without waiting to be accused, proceeded to justify herself from so unkind an imputation, in a formal letter to her royal kinswoman, in which she says, "It seemeth that report hath been made to you, that we had sent out our admiral with our fleet to impede your passage. Your servants know how false this is. We have only, at the desire of the King of Spain, sent two or three small barks to sea, in pursuit of certain Scotch pirates."

The young Queen of Scotland accepted the explanation with great courtesy, and though perfectly aware of the intrigues that had been, and continued to be, practised against her in her own Court by Elizabeth, she pursued an amicable and conciliatory policy towards her, entered into a friendly correspondence, and expressed the greatest desire for a personal interview.

Elizabeth was too deeply skilled in the regnal science, not to be aware that a country is never so sure of enjoying the blessings of peace as when prepared for war, and therefore her principal care was bestowed in providing her realm with the means of defence. Gunpowder was first manufactured by her orders and encouragement in England; which all her predecessors had contented themselves with purchasing abroad. She sent for engineers, and furnished regular arsenals in all fortified towns along the coast and the Scottish borders, increased the garrison of Berwick, and caused a fort to be built on the banks of the Medway, near Upnor, where the ships should ride in shelter, and increased the wages of the mariners and soldiers, to encourage them to serve her well. She not only caused ships of war to be built for the increase of her navy, but she encouraged the wealthy inhabitants of seaports to emulate her example; so that, instead of hiring, as her father and others of her predecessors had done, ships from the Hans towns and Italian republics, she was, in the fourth year of her reign, able to put to sea a fleet with twenty thousand men-at-arms. Strangers named her *the queen of the sea*, and the north star—her own subjects proudly styled her the restorer of naval glory.

CHAPTER V

Elizabeth's persecutions of Nonconformists—Her visit to St. Paul's—Displeasure with the Dean—New year's gift—Predictions of her death—Parliament petitions her to marry or declare her successor—Her irritability—She prevents the Queen of Scots' marriage—Offers Robert Dudley's hand to the Queen of Scots—Creates him Earl of Leicester—Marriage offer of Charles IX.—Discourses of Leicester and French ambassadors—Elizabeth imprisons Lady Mary Grey—Takes offence with Leicester—The queen gives Leicester hopes—Her irresolution—Cruelty to Heath—Her deceitful treatment of the Scotch rebels—Hopes and fears of Leicester—Elizabeth's vexation at the birth of Mary Stuart's son—Dispute with Parliament—Remonstrates with Mary Stuart—Description of the Archduke Charles—Arrival of Mary Queen of Scots in England—Crooked policy of Elizabeth—Conferences at York—Norfolk's suspected correspondence with Mary—Elizabeth's reply to Lady Lennox.

THE evidences of history prove that religious persecution generates faction, and lends the most formidable weapons to the disaffected by dignifying treason with the name of piety. Thus was it in the Pilgrimage of Grace, in the reign of Henry VIII.; with Kett's rebellion, in that of Edward VI.; and the Wyatt insurrection, in that of Mary. Whether under the rival names of Catholic or Protestant, the principle was the same, and the crown of martyrdom was claimed by the sufferer for conscience' sake of either party.

The experience of the religious struggles, in the last three reigns, had failed to teach Elizabeth the futility of monarchs attempting to make their opinions on theological matters a rule for the consciences of their subjects. Her first act of intolerance was levelled against the Anabaptists, by the publication of an edict, in which they and other heretics, whether foreign or native, were enjoined to depart the realm within twenty days, on pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of goods. Subsequently, in a fruitless attempt to establish uniformity of

worship throughout the realm, she treated her dissenting subjects, of all classes, with great severity, as well as those who adhered to the tenets of the Church of Rome. The attempt to force persons of opposite opinions to a reluctant conformity with the newly established ritual rendered it distasteful to many, who would probably, if left to the exercise of their own discretion, have adopted it, in time, as the happy medium between the two extremes of Rome and Geneva. In Ireland, coercive measures were followed by disaffection and revolt, and opened the door to plots and perpetual enterprises against the queen's person and government, both from foreign powers and those within her own realm who were desirous of being governed by a sovereign of their own creed.

On the first day of 1562 the queen went in state to St. Paul's Cathedral. The dean, having notice of her intention, had been at some pains and great expense in ornamenting a prayer-book with beautiful prints, illustrative of the history of the apostles and martyrs, which were placed at the epistles and gospels appointed to be read by the Church of England, on their commemorations. The book, being intended as a new year's gift for her majesty, was richly bound, and laid on the cushion for her use. A proclamation had, indeed, lately been set forth, to please the Puritan party, against images, pictures, and Romish relics, but as Elizabeth continued to retain a large silver crucifix over the altar of the Chapel Royal, with candlesticks and other ornaments, the use or disuse of which might be regarded rather as a matter of taste than religion, the dean supposed that her majesty did not object to works of art on scriptural subjects as embellishments for her books of devotion. Elizabeth, however, thought it expedient to get up a little scene on this occasion, in order to manifest her zeal against Popery before a multitude. When she came to her place, she opened the book, but, seeing the pictures, frowned, blushed, and shut it (of which several took notice), and calling to the verger, bade him, "bring her the book she was accustomed to use." After the service was concluded she went straight into the vestry, where she asked the dean, "how that book came to be placed on her cushion?"

He replied "that he intended it as a new year's gift to her majesty." "You never could present me with a worse," rejoined the queen. "Why so?" asked the dean. Her majesty, after a vehement protestation of her aversion to idolatry, reminded him of her recent proclamation against superstitious pictures and images, and asked "if it had been read in his deanery?" The dean replied "that it had, but he meant no harm in causing the prints to be bound up in the service-book." She told him "that he must be very ignorant indeed to do so, after her prohibition." The poor dean humbly suggested "that, if so, her majesty might the better pardon him." The queen prayed "that God would grant him a better spirit and more wisdom for the future;" to which royal petition, in his behalf, the dean meekly cried, "Amen." Then the queen asked "how he came by the pictures, and by whom engraved?" He said, "he bought them of a German;" and her majesty observed, "It is well it was from a stranger; had it been any of our subjects we should have questioned the matter." The menace implied in this speech, against native artists, who should venture to engrave plates from scriptural subjects, naturally deterred them from copying the immortal works of the great Flemish, Italian, and Spanish masters, which were chiefly confined to themes from sacred history or saintly lore, and may well explain the otherwise unaccountable fact, that the pictorial arts in England retrograded, instead of improved, from the accession of Elizabeth till the reign of Charles I.

About this time, Margaret, Countess of Lennox, the queen's nearest relation of the royal Tudor blood, and who stood next to the Queen of Scots in the hereditary order of the regal succession, was arrested and thrown into prison. Her ostensible offence was, having corresponded secretly with her royal niece, the Queen of Scots; but, having been the favourite friend of the late queen, who was at one time reported to have intended to appoint her as her successor, to the prejudice of Elizabeth, that princess had cherished great ill-will against her, and she now caused her to be arraigned on the formidable charges

of treason and witchcraft. The countess was, with four others, found guilty of having consulted with pretended wizards and conjurors, to learn how long the queen had to live.

The luckless lady had some cause of alarm, for her life lay at the mercy of the queen, and the accusation of sorcery against royal ladies had hitherto generally emanated either from the hatred or rapacity of the sovereign.

In the autumn of 1562 the queen was attacked with a long and dangerous illness, and an astrologer named Prestal, who had cast her nativity, predicted that she would die in the ensuing March. This prophecy, becoming very generally whispered abroad, inspired two royally descended brothers of the name of Pole, the representatives of the line of Clarence, with the wild project of raising a body of troops, and landing them in Wales, to proclaim Mary Stuart queen, in the event of her majesty's death, in the hope that the beautiful heiress of the crown would reward one of them with her hand and the other with the Dukedom of Clarence. This romantic plot transpired, and the brothers with their confederates were arraigned for high treason. They protested their innocence of conspiring against the queen, but confessed to having placed implicit reliance on the prediction of Prestal, and that their plot only involved the matter of the succession. It appears probable that this political soothsaying was connected with the misdemeanour of Lady Lennox. Cecil laboured hard to construe the visionary scheme of the deluded young men into a confederacy of the Guises and Mary Queen of Scots, but the notion was too absurd. They were condemned to die, but Elizabeth, having no reason to suppose they had practised against her life, revolted at that time from the thought of shedding kindred blood on the scaffold on a pretence so frivolous. She graciously extended her pardon to Arthur Pole and his brother, and allowed them to pass beyond sea.

The queen in her royal robes, with her bishops and peers, rode in great state, from her palace, January 12th, 1563, to open the Parliament at Westminster.

The first step taken, after the choice of a Speaker, was to petition the queen to marry ; this, indeed, appeared the only means of averting the long and bloody successive wars, with which, according to human probability, the rival claims of the female descendants of Henry VII. threatened the nation, in the event of Elizabeth dying without lawful issue of her own. The elements of deadly debate, which Henry VIII. had left as his last legacy to England, by his arbitrary innovations in the regular order of succession, had been augmented by Elizabeth's refusal to acknowledge the rights of the Queen of Scots as the presumptive inheritor of the throne. The cruel policy which had led her to nullify the marriage and stigmatise the offspring of the hapless representative of the Suffolk line, had apparently provided further perplexities and occasions of strife. With this stormy perspective, the people naturally regarded the life of the reigning sovereign as their best security against the renewal of struggles no less direful than the Wars of the Roses. In this idea Elizabeth wished them to remain, and it was no part of her intention to lessen the difficulties in which the perilous question of heirship to the crown was involved. She briefly replied to the remonstrance of her Parliament on this subject, and that of her marriage—"that she had not forgotten the suit of the house, nor ever could forget it, but it was a matter in which she would be advised." Elizabeth was just then too busily occupied in traversing every proposal of marriage that was made to the Queen of Scots, to have leisure to think much of her own.

Since the widowhood of Mary Stuart, all Elizabeth's rejected suitors had transferred their addresses to the younger and fairer queen of the sister realm, and nothing but the political expediency of maintaining the guise of friendship she had assumed towards Mary prevented her from manifesting the jealousy and ill-will excited in her haughty spirit by every fresh circumstance of the kind. Mary very obligingly communicated all her offers to her good sister of England, having promised to be guided by her advice on this important subject, and all were equally objectionable in Elizabeth's opinion. Mary,

in the morning freshness of youth, beauty, and poetic genius, cared for none of these things ; her heart was long faithful to the memory of her buried lord, and she allowed Elizabeth to dictate refusals to her illustrious wooers with perfect unconcern, in the hope that in return for this singular condescension her good sister would be won upon to acknowledge her right to succeed to the crown of England, in the event of that queen dying without lawful issue.

Elizabeth was inflexible in her refusal to concede this point. She replied "that the right of succession to her throne should never be made a subject of discussion ; it would cause disputes as to the validity of this or that marriage," in allusion to the old dispute of Henry VIII.'s marriage with her mother, which was, in truth, the source of Elizabeth's jealousy of all her royal kindred. Mary consented to acknowledge that the right to the English crown was vested in Elizabeth and her posterity, if, in return, Elizabeth would declare her claims to the succession as presumptive heiress. Elizabeth in reply said "that she could not do so without conceiving a dislike to Mary," and asked, "How it were possible for her to love any one whose interest it was to see her dead ?" She enlarged withal on the inconstancy of human affections and the proneness of men in general to worship the rising sun. "It was so in her sister's reign," she said, "and would be so again if she were ever to declare her successor." It was then proposed that the two queens should meet, and settle their differences in an amicable manner. Mary, with the confiding frankness that marked her character, agreed to come to York for this purpose, and a passport was even signed for her and her retinue, of a thousand horse ; and when Elizabeth, for some reason, postponed the meeting to an indefinite time, the young sovereign of Scotland, in her romantic infatuation, wept with passionate regret at her disappointment.

Elizabeth had at this time much to harass and disquiet her. The expedition which she had been persuaded to send out to the shores of Normandy had been anything but successful ; much treasure and blood had been uselessly expended, and the city of

Rouen, after it had been defended with fruitless valour, was taken by the Royalist forces, and two hundred brave English auxiliaries put to the sword.

The plague breaking out in the garrisons of Newhaven and Havre de Grace, also caused such ravages, that the Earl of Warwick found himself compelled to surrender Havre to the French, and bring the sickly remnant of his army home. They brought the infection with them, and twenty thousand persons died in the metropolis alone.

The report that her former suitor, the Archduke Charles, was in treaty for the hand of the Queen of Scots, filled Elizabeth's mind with jealous displeasure, for of all the princes of Europe he was esteemed the most honourable and chivalric, and Elizabeth's rejection of his suit appears to have been only for the purpose of obtaining concessions on the subject of his religion more consistent with her own profession. She made very earnest remonstrances to the Queen of Scots on the unsuitableness of this alliance; and Cecil, at the same time, wrote to Mundt, one of the pensionaries in Germany, to move the Duke of Wirtemberg to advise the emperor to repeat the offer of his son to the Queen of England. The duke performed his part with all due regard to the honour of her maiden majesty, for he sent an envoy to entreat her to permit him to name a person whom he considered would make her very happy in the wedded state, at the same time that he preferred his private mission to the emperor. Elizabeth replied, with her usual prudery on the subject of marriage, "that although she felt no inclination towards matrimony, she was willing, for the good of her realm, to receive the communication of which the duke had spoken." Unfortunately, however, the emperor had taken umbrage at the previous rejection of his son's addresses, and declared "he would not expose himself to a second insult of the kind." When Elizabeth found she could not withdraw the archduke from Mary, she determined to compel Mary to resign him. Accordingly, she gave that queen to understand that she could not consent to her contracting such a marriage, which must prove inimical to the friendship between the two crowns, and that,

"unless Mary would marry as she desired, she would probably forfeit all hope of a peaceful succession to the English crown." Mary had the complaisance to give up this accomplished prince, who was, perhaps, the only man in Europe worthy of becoming her husband, and professed her willingness to listen to the advice of her good sister, if she wished to propose a more suitable consort.

Randolph, Elizabeth's ambassador, suggested that an English noble would be more agreeable to his royal mistress than any other person. Mary requested to be informed more clearly on this point, for it was generally supposed that the young Duke of Norfolk, being the kinsman of the queen, and one of the richest subjects in England, was the person intended for this signal honour by his sovereign. Elizabeth electrified both Courts by naming her own favourite, Lord Robert Dudley. Mary replied, "that she considered it beneath her dignity to marry a subject," and told her base brother, Murray, who repeated her unlucky witticism to the English ambassador, "that she looked on the offer of a person so dear to Elizabeth, as a proof of goodwill rather than of good meaning." Elizabeth, soon after, complained that Mary had treated the proposal of Lord Robert Dudley with mockery, which Mary, in a letter to her own ambassador at Paris, affirms that she never did, and wondered "who could have borne such testimony, to embroil her with that queen." If, however, Mary forebore from mockery at this offer, no one else did, for it was a theme of public mirth and satire in England, Scotland, and France. Dudley, who had the presumption to aim at a still higher mark, and had been encouraged, by the extraordinary tokens of favour lavished upon him by his royal mistress, to conceive confident hopes of success, was surprised and offended at his own nomination to an honour so infinitely above the rank and pretensions of any person of his name and family. In fact, he regarded it as a snare laid in his path by Cecil, who was jealous of his influence with Elizabeth, and would, he suspected, avail himself of this pretence to remove him from her Court and presence. Elizabeth was flattered at Dudley's reluctance to wed her fairer rival, and redoubled her

commendations of his various qualifications to the favour of a royal lady; she even offered to acknowledge Mary as her successor to the crown of England, on condition of her becoming his wife. The hope of obtaining this recognition was artfully held out to Mary, as the lure to draw her into the negotiation, and so far it succeeded, although the royal beauty was not sufficiently an adept in diplomatic trickery to conceal, at all times, the scorn with which she regarded a suitor so infinitely beneath her. Meantime she was secretly courted by her aunt, Lady Lennox, for the young Henry, Lord Darnley, and was believed to incline towards that alliance.

At the very time Elizabeth was recommending her handsome master of the horse to her good sister of Scotland, she had so little command over herself, that she was constantly betraying her own partiality for him to Sir James Melville, Mary's envoy, nor would she permit Melville to return home till he had seen Dudley created Earl of Leicester and Baron of Denbigh. This was done with great state at Westminster; "herself," says Melville, "helping to put on his robes, he sitting on his knees before her, and keeping a great gravity and discreet behaviour, but as for the queen she could not refrain from putting her hand in his neck to tickle him, smilingly, the French ambassador and I standing beside her. Then she asked me 'how I liked him?' I said, 'as he was a worthy subject, so he was happy in a great prince, who could discern and reward good service.' 'Yet,' replied she, 'ye like better of yon lang lad,' pointing towards my Lord Darnley, who, as nearest prince of the blood, that day bare the sword before her. My answer again was, 'that no woman of spirit would make choice of sic a man, that was liker a woman than a man, for he was lusty, beardless, and lady-faced.' I had no will that she should think I liked him, though I had a secret charge to deal with his mother, Lady Lennox, to purchase leave for him to pass to Scotland.

"She appeared to be so affectionate to Queen Mary, her good sister, that she had a great desire to see her, and because that could not be, she delighted oft to look on her picture. She took me to her bed-chamber, and opened a little *lettoun*, (perhaps a

desk,) where there were divers little pictures wrapped in paper, their names written with her own hand. Upon the first she took up was written, 'My lord's picture.' This was Leicester's portrait. I held the candle, and pressed to see my lord's picture. Albeit, she was loth to let me see it, but I became importunate for it, to carry home to my queen; she refused, saying, 'She had but one of his.' I replied, 'She had the original.' She was then at the farther end of her bed-chamber, talking with Cecil. Elizabeth then took out my queen's (of Scots) miniature, and kissed it." Melville kissed her hand in acknowledgment of the great fondness she manifested to Mary.

Elizabeth appears to have pressed this marriage on her royal kinswoman of Scotland, without any real intention of resigning her favourite to that queen, but rather for the purpose, it has been supposed, of paving the way for her own marriage with him, by having proved that she esteemed him worthy of being the consort of another female sovereign. If Mary could have been induced to signify her consent to accept Leicester for her husband, then probably it was intended for him to declare the impossibility of his resigning the service of his royal mistress, even to become the spouse of the Queen of Scots, and this would have afforded Elizabeth a really popular opportunity of rewarding him for the sacrifice, with her own hand. Matters never reached this point; for when Mary was urged to accept the newly created English earl, the queen-mother of France, and her kinsmen of the house of Guise, expressed the utmost contempt at the idea of so unsuitable an alliance, and assured her that Elizabeth intended to marry him herself. This opinion must have had some weight when united with Melville's report of the indecorous manner in which the English queen had committed herself, in toying with Leicester, during the ceremonial of his investiture, unrestrained even by the presence of the foreign ambassadors. Meantime, peace having been established with France, a regal suitor was offered to Elizabeth's acceptance in the person of Charles IX., the youthful monarch of that realm, who had been recently declared by the States of France to have attained his majority, although his mother, Catherine de Medicis,

continued to govern in his name. He was, at this time, about sixteen, and Elizabeth with great propriety replied to Michel Castelnau, the ambassador by whom the proposal was submitted to her, "that she was greatly obliged for the signal honour that was done her by so mighty and powerful a king, to whom, as well as to the queen, his mother, she professed herself infinitely beholden, but that she felt this difficulty—the most Christian king, her good brother, was too great and too small—too great, as a monarch of such a realm, to be able to quit his own dominions to cross the sea and remain in England, where the people always expected their kings and queens to live. Too small," she explained by saying, "that his majesty was young and she was already thirty, which she called old." Castelnau, not being accustomed to Elizabeth's coquettish manners, far from suspecting that this depreciatory remark on her own age was a trap for a complimentary rejoinder on his part, gave her credit for meaning what she said, and adds with great simplicity, "She has said the same thing ever since her accession to the throne, although there is not a lady in her Court who surpasses her in her endowments of mind and body."

The English nobles suggested to Castelnau that the young Duke of Anjou, Charles IX.'s brother, would be, in point of situation, a more suitable consort for the queen than Charles, as neither France nor England could permit the absence of their respective sovereigns. The French, they said, would not like their king to reside in England, nor would the English permit their queen to live in France. Elizabeth gave no encouragement, at that time, to overtures for her union with either of the royal brothers of Valois, and Castelnau proceeded to Scotland to offer the younger prince to the other island queen, Mary Stuart, of whom he speaks, in his despatches to his own Court, in the most lively terms of admiration and respect.

A matrimonial union between the crowns of England and France was too brilliant a chimera to be hastily or lightly abandoned by that restless *intriguante* and shallow politician, Catherine de Medicis, and she subsequently empowered the resident French ambassador, de Foys, to renew the proposal

for a marriage between her eldest son, the youthful sovereign of France, and the maiden monarch of England. To this second overture, Elizabeth replied :

“I find myself, on the one hand, much honoured by the proposal of the French king ; on the other, I am older than he and would rather die than see myself despised and neglected. My subjects, I am assured, would oppose no obstacle, if it were my wish, for they have more than once prayed me to marry after my own inclination. It is true they have said, ‘that it would pleasure them if my choice should fall on an Englishman.’ In England, however, there is no one disposable in marriage but the Earl of Arundel, and he is further removed from the match than the east from the west ; and as to the Earl of Leicester, I have always loved his virtues.” The ambassador was too finished a courtier, it seems, to interrupt her majesty by asking her to point these out—a question, which certainly would embarrass the most partial apologist of the crimes of this bold, but not brave, bad man. “But,” pursues Elizabeth, “the aspirations towards honour and greatness which are in me cannot suffer him as a companion and a husband.”

After this confidential explanation of her feelings towards the two rival earls, her subjects, her majesty, in allusion to the extreme youthfulness of her regal wooer, added, laughing, “My neighbour, Mary Stuart, is younger than I am ; she will perhaps better please the king.” “This has never been spoken of,” replied de Foys, “she having been the wife of his brother.” “Several persons,” rejoined Elizabeth, “and among others, Lethington, have tried to persuade me that such a plan was in agitation, but I did not believe it.”

A few days after, Elizabeth sent for de Foys again, and repeated her objections to the marriage with his boy-king. De Foys endeavoured to convince her they were of no weight, but, after a little courtly flattery had been expended, the negotiation was broken off.

De Foys’ reports appear to have convinced his own Court that it was Elizabeth’s positive intention to give her hand to Leicester, for Catherine de Medicis enjoined him to cultivate the

goodwill of this favoured peer, and entitle the Royal Family of France to his gratitude, by advocating the match with the Queen of England. "I told Queen Elizabeth," writes de Foys, in reply to the queen-mother, "that she could do nothing better for the welfare, repose, and content of her kingdom, than to espouse one of the great peers of England, and that she would put an affront upon the king and your majesty if she were to wed any other foreign prince, after having finally grounded her rejection of the king on the plea that a stranger would be unwelcome to the English." Elizabeth replied, "that she was not yet decided whom to marry," observing, "that even if she espoused a person without extensive possessions, his marriage with her would give him the means of engaging in pernicious schemes and intrigues. For this reason," continued she, "I will never concede to a husband any share in my power ;" and added, "that but for the sake of posterity and the good of her realm, she would not marry at all. If she did, however, she did not mean to follow his advice by wedding a subject ; she had it in her power to wed a king if she pleased, or a powerful prince, so as to over-awe France." This was in allusion to the Archduke Charles, who, having been decisively rejected by Mary of Scotland, was renewing his suit to her. She complained "that Charles IX. took part with the Queen of Scots, while Darnley was writing her submissive letters and seeking her protection." This reproachful observation proves that Elizabeth and Darnley were already secretly reconciled. She had vehemently opposed his marriage with Mary Stuart, and yet had permitted him to visit the Court of that queen.

The hitherto impregnable heart of the beautiful widow had surrendered itself at first sight of "the beardless, lady-faced boy," and Darnley paid no heed to the peremptory mandates of his sometime English sovereign, to return at peril of outlawry, and forfeiture of his English inheritance. He kept the field of his new fortunes, and was a thriving wooer.

De Foys, as soon as he heard the Queen of Scots had resolved on the marriage with her cousin Darnley, went to Elizabeth with the intention of defending Mary : he found the

queen at chess, and said, profiting by the opportunity of introducing the subject, "This game is an image of the words and deeds of men. If, for example, we lose a pawn, it seems but a small matter ; nevertheless, the loss often draws after it that of the whole game." The queen replied, "I understand you ; Darnley is but a pawn, but may well checkmate me, if he is promoted."

After these words she left off playing, complained much of the disloyalty of Darnley and his father, and made evident her intentions of dealing, if it were possible, hostilely by them. The only means she had, however, of testifying her anger effectively, was by sending Margaret, Countess of Lennox, to her old quarters in the Tower.

Two out of the four royal ladies who stood in immediate proximity to the throne were now incarcerated on frivolous charges, and on August 21st a third of this luckless quartette, Lady Mary Grey, was added to the list of fair State prisoners, for no greater crime than stealing a love-match like her sister, Lady Katharine.

In a letter wherein Cecil relates the disgrace of Lady Mary Grey, he favours an absent colleague with the following important piece of secret information, which is partly written in cipher :—"You may perchance, by some private letter hereafter, hear of a strange accident here, and therefore I will, in a few words, give you some light. The queen's majesty is fallen into some misliking with my Lord of Leicester, and he therewith much dismayed. You know how busy men in Court will be to descant hereupon. The queen's majesty letteth it appear, in many overt speeches, that she is sorry for her loss of time, and so is every good subject." In what other way can this sentence be explained than that Elizabeth, having quarrelled with her presumptuous favourite, repented of the impediment which her flirtations with him had opposed in her matrimonial treaties with foreign princes ? By October, however, the queen manifested an increase of regard for Leicester, such as made his enemies hasten to effect a reconciliation with him. He received their advances in a conciliatory manner, and took a more subtle revenge on Cecil than

if he had exerted his renewed influence to effect his fall, by honouring him with a provoking offer of his patronage, in a tone that could not fail to recall to the mind of the man who ruled the destinies of Protestant Europe, and feared not to controvert and bend to his own policy the declared will of the lion-like sovereign herself, the time when he was an underling official in the train of his own *parvenu* father, the Duke of Northumberland.

"I have long known your good qualities," said Leicester, "your conscientiousness, and knowledge of business. I have, on these accounts, always loved you, although I know that you would fain marry the queen to a foreign prince. I will now tell you plainly that I am a claimant for the hand of the queen, and it seems to me that she looks upon no one with favour but myself. I therefore beseech you that you will lay aside all other projects, and then I will always give you my hand, and not only keep you where you are, but take care for your further elevation as you deserve, and as the service of the State may require." Cecil had sufficient command over his feelings to thank the favourite for his good opinion and apparent goodwill.

A few of the less pleasing traits of Elizabeth's character developed themselves this year, among which may be reckoned her unkind treatment of the venerable Dr. Heath, the nonjuring Archbishop of York, and formerly Lord Chancellor. It has been shown that he performed good and loyal service for Elizabeth, whose doubtful title was established, beyond dispute, by his making her first proclamation a solemn act of both Houses of Parliament. Subsequently, in 1560, he was ordered into confinement in the Tower, because he would not acknowledge Elizabeth's supremacy over the Church. He remained there till he was sent into a sort of prison restraint at one of the houses belonging to his see in Yorkshire. His mode of imprisonment permitted him to take walks for exercise. These rambles could not have been very far, for he was turned of eighty. They were regarded with jealousy, and the following order of council exists, in answer to a letter from Lord Scrope, relative to the examination by him to be taken of Nicholas Heath, with whom

his lordship is required to proceed somewhat sharply withal, "to the end that he should declare the full truth why he wandereth abroad ; and if he will not be plain, to use some kind of torture to him, so as to be without any great bodily hurt, and to advertise his (Lord Scrope's) doings herein."

The old man had been on terms of friendship with the queen, had done her worthy service ; he had been considered an opponent of persecution ; yet could Elizabeth, then little turned of thirty, sit in her conclave, and order the unfortunate prisoner to be pinched with the torture, to reveal some vague and indefinite crime, which perhaps only existed in the suspicions of his enemies.

Elizabeth had ordered her ministers at the Court of Edinburgh, Throckmorton and Randolph, to foment the disaffections there, and especially to encourage Murray and his party in their opposition to the marriage of Mary with Darnley ; in consequence of which they at length took up arms against their sovereign. They were defeated, and forced to retreat into England. Murray proceeded to London, and requested an interview with the queen ; considering, doubtless, that he had a claim to her favour and protection, having acted in secret understanding with her ministers.

The queen, however, refused at first to see him, or any of the confederates. Murray complained to Cecil and others, "that he had been moved to what he had done by the instigation of Queen Elizabeth, whereby he had lost all in Scotland." Elizabeth caused it to be represented to him that this was very displeasing to her, and that she would only see him and his friends on condition of their exonerating her from any share in the plot against his own Government. When they had received their lesson, they were admitted to an audience, in the presence of the French and Spanish ambassadors, and falling on their knees, they declared that "the queen was innocent of the conspiracy, and had never advised them to disobey their sovereign lady."

"Now," replied Elizabeth, "ye have spoken truth. Get from my presence ; traitors, as ye are " Thus did she outwit, and

trample on her own abased instruments. However, she gave Murray a pension, secretly. Throckmorton was so indignant at her attempting to treat his intrigues with the unsuccessful Scottish rebels as if unauthorized by herself, that he exposed the secret orders on which he had acted ; which was never forgiven by Elizabeth and Leicester, although he had been, as the reader has seen, one of the oldest and most trusty of the friends of her youth.

This year Elizabeth having appointed Sir Henry Sidney to the government of Ireland, addressed to him a sapient, but pedantic letter, on the occasion of the feud between the Earls of Desmond and Ormond, in which she prescribes the part he is to take, in a series of quaint punning aphorisms, not always *apropos* to the subject ; and rather reminding us of what Lord Byron called "hints and howls, by way of an oration."

Early in the new year arrived Rambouillet, an envoy-extraordinary from Charles IX., to invest any two of her majesty's great nobles, whom it might please her to point out, with the insignia of Saint Michael, the national order of France, which had never before been bestowed on any English subject, save Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Elizabeth named her kinsman, the Duke of Norfolk, who then held a distinguished place in her favour, and the Earl of Leicester. It had occasioned great wonder, in the first year of her reign, when this nobleman was chosen as one of the Knights of the Garter ; but so many honours and privileges had since been conferred on him, that this was regarded as a matter of course ; and every one expected that his next preferment would be to the Crown-matrimonial of England. Elizabeth had promised to give him a decided answer at Candlemas ; but when that time came she still hesitated. Cecil had bided his time ; and when he found her dubious, he suggested six important objections to the marriage. 1st. Leicester could bring neither riches, power, nor estimation. 2nd. He was deeply involved in debt, notwithstanding all that had been lavished upon him. 3rd. He was surrounded by needy and rapacious dependents who would engross all the favour and all the patronage of the Crown. 4th. He was so

violent and mutable in his passions, one day so jealous, and another so indifferent, that the queen could not expect to live happily with him. 5th. He was infamed, by the death of his wife ; and, 6th. His marriage with his sovereign, would be taken as a confirmation of all the scandalous reports that had been so long and confidently circulated, both at home and abroad.

The wedded misery of the Queen of Scots, and the ingratitude, ambition, and misconduct of Darnley, probably operated as a warning to the wary Elizabeth of the danger she might encounter if she married a subject ; and, above all, she knew Leicester too well to trust him.

Where crowns and sovereigns are at stake, the game must needs be delicately played by those who hope to win ; but Leicester's egotism led him to forget the respect due to his royal mistress so far as to unbosom himself without reserve to the new French ambassador, La Forêt, who, on August 6th, 1566, communicated the following particulars to his own Court : "The earl has admitted to me, laughing and sighing at the same time, 'that he knows not what to hope or fear, that he is more uncertain than ever whether the queen wishes to marry him or not ; that she has so many and great princes suitors, that he knows not what to do, or what to think.' Subsequently he has said, 'I believe not in truth that the queen will ever marry. I have known her, from her eighth year, better than any man upon earth. From that date she has invariably declared that she would remain unmarried. Should she, however, alter that determination, I am all but convinced she would choose no other than myself. At least, the queen has done me the honour to say as much to me, and I am as much in her favour as ever.'"

While these doubts and fears, hopes and misgivings, on the subject of love and matrimony were agitating the mighty Elizabeth, her ambitious favourite, her anxious premier, and jealous kinsmen, Mary Stuart, on June 19th, had given birth to a son, who was one day to unite the Britannic Isles in one peaceful and glorious Empire. Sir James Melville was despatched in all haste to announce this joyful event to Elizabeth.

The Court was then at Greenwich ; and Cecil, hastening to the royal presence before Melville was admitted, approached her majesty, who was dancing merrily in the hall after supper, and whispered the news in her ear. The mirth and music ceased ; for all present were startled at the sudden change which came over the queen, who, unable to conceal her vexation, sat down, leaning her head on her hand, and then burst out to some of her ladies, who anxiously inquired what ailed her grace—"The Queen of Scots is lighter of a fair son ; and I am but a barren stock !" This extraordinary lamentation for a maiden queen was duly reported to Melville ; when he came next morning to his official audience, his spies and friends told him, withal, that the queen had been earnestly counselled to conceal her chagrin, and "show a glad countenance." However, she rather overacted her part, if Melville bears true witness, since, at his introduction, he says, "She welcomed me with a merry *volt*," which certainly must mean that she cut a caper at the sight of him. "She then thanked me for the despatch I had used, and told me 'the news I brought had recovered her from a heavy sickness, which had held her fifteen days !' All this she said and did, before I delivered my letter of credence. I told her, when she had read it, 'that my queen knew, of all her friends, her majesty would be the gladdest of the news, albeit her son was dear bought with peril of her life ;' adding, 'that she was so sair handled in the meantime, that she *wisset* she had never married.' This I said to give the English queen a little scare of marrying ; she boasted sometimes that she was on the point of marrying the Archduke Charles, whenever she was pressed to name the second person, or heir to the English crown. Then I requested her majesty to be a gossip to our queen ; for cummers, or godmothers, are called gossips in England. This she granted gladly. Then, I said, her majesty would have a fair occasion to see our queen, which she had so oft desired. At this she smiled, and said, 'she wished that her estate and affairs might permit her,' and promised to send honourable lords and ladies to supply her place." She sent the Earl of Bedford as her

representative to congratulate the queen, and to present her splendid christening gift, a font of gold worth £1000, which she expressed some fear that the little prince might have overgrown. "If you find it so," said she, "you may observe that our good sister has only to keep it for the next, or some such merry talk." Elizabeth appointed Mary's illegitimate sister, the beautiful Countess of Argyle, to act as her proxy at the baptism of the heir of Scotland, which was performed according to the rites of the Church of Rome. The royal infant received the names of Charles James, though he reigned under that of James alone.

Elizabeth was the principal cause of the unfortunate husband of Mary not being present at the baptism of his royal infant, because she had positively enjoined her ambassador to refuse to acknowledge his conventional title of King of Scotland.

The birth of a son to the Queen of Scots had strengthened the party of those who were desirous of seeing the succession settled on the hereditary claimants who would ultimately unite the crowns of England and Scotland in peace and prosperity. On the other hand, the Protestant community, dreading a renewal of persecution if the sceptre passed into the hands of a Catholic sovereign, desired the marriage of Elizabeth, in the hope of continuing under monarchs of her own immediate lineage.

When the Parliament met after six lengthened prorogations, both parties united in addressing her majesty on the two subjects most distasteful to her—her marriage and the settlement of the royal succession. She heard them with fierce impatience, and, like a true daughter of Henry VIII., bade them "attend to their own duties, and she would perform hers." They were of a different spirit from the men who had crouched to her father's bad passions and ill manners, for they exerted the independence of the national senate by refusing to grant the supplies, on the grounds that her majesty had not performed the conditions on which the last were given, and passed a vote that nothing of the kind should be done, till she thought proper to accede to the wishes of the nation by settling the succession.

A deputation of twenty peers addressed the queen on the evils resulting from her silence. She answered haughtily, "that she did not choose that her grave should be dug while she was yet alive: that the Commons had acted like rebels, and had treated her as they durst not have treated her father." She added, with infinite scorn, "that the Lords might pass a similar vote if they pleased, but their votes were but empty breath without her royal assent." She called them "hair-brained politicians, unfit to decide on such matters," and referred herself to a committee of six grave and discreet councillors of her own choosing, "by whose advice," she said, "she intended to be guided."

This intemperate and despotic language did not suit the temper of the times, and was followed by the first serious opposition and censure of the conduct of the sovereign that had been heard for centuries in the national senate. Leicester, provoked probably at the determination of the queen not to risk bestowing a share in her power and privileges on a consort, took a leading part in this debate, which so offended her that she forbade him and the Earl of Pembroke her presence. Party recriminations ran high on this subject; Leicester had avenged the opposition of Cecil to his marriage with their sovereign, by causing it to be generally circulated that the jealousy of the premier was the real obstacle which deterred her majesty from fulfilling the wishes of her people, and great ill-will was expressed to the minister on this account, and public curses were bestowed on Huick, the queen's physician, for having said something in his professional character which had deterred her majesty from matrimony. On October 27th a general petition was addressed to her majesty by both Houses of Parliament, entreating her either to choose a consort or name a successor. Elizabeth assured them "that she had not bound herself by any vow of celibacy never to trade (as she termed it) in that kind of life called marriage." She acknowledged "that she thought it best for private women, but as a prince she endeavoured to bend her mind to it, and as for the matter of the succession, she promised that they should have the benefit of her prayers." The Commons were not content with this oracular declaration, and passed a

vote that the Bill for the supplies should be incorporated with a Bill for the settlement of the succession. The queen was exasperated at this novel step in the provision of ways and means, and when it was communicated to her, by a deputation from the Lower House, she hastily scribbled at the foot of the address her sentiments on the occasion, which, according to a notation in cipher, added by Sir William Cecil, she repeated, by way of answer, to Mr. Speaker and thirty members of the House of Commons, who brought up the unlucky address, November 14th, 1566. It is to be hoped her speech was more perspicuous than her notes of it, or little could the Commons learn further than that their liege lady was in a rage :—

“ I know no reason why any my private answers to the realm should serve for prologue to a subsidy vote ; neither yet do I understand why such audacity should be used to make without any licence an Act of my words. Are my words like lawyers' books, which now-a-days go to the wire-drawers, to make subtle doings more plain ? Is there no hold of my speech without an Act to compel me to confirm ! Shall my princely consent be turned to strengthen my words, that be not of themselves substantives ? Say no more at this time, but if these fellows—(we fear she meant the members of the House of Commons by this irreverent word *fellows*)—were well answered, and paid with lawful coin, there would be no fewer counterfeits among them ! ”

The Commons regarded this intimation as a breach of their privileges, and allowed the Bill for the supplies—that business to which alone her majesty was desirous they should direct their attention—to remain unnoticed. They maintained with unwonted independence, “ that since the queen would not marry, she ought to be compelled to name her successor, and that her refusing to do so proceeded from feelings which could only be entertained by weak princes and faint-hearted women.” Elizabeth was mortified at this language, but felt that she reigned solely by the will of her own people, whose representatives she had insulted. France, Spain, Scotland, Rome, were ready to unite against her if she took one false step ; and she was without money. It was not in her temper to retract, but she well knew how to cajole, and sending for thirty members from each House, she assured them of her loving affection and desire to do all that her subjects' weal required, and that, understanding that the House was

willing to grant her an extra subsidy if she would declare her successor, she could only say, "that half would content her, as she considered that money in her subjects' purses was as good as in her own exchequer." This popular sentiment obtained from the Parliament the really ample grant of one-fifteenth and one-tenth from the people, and four shillings in the pound from the clergy, unfettered by any conditions whatsoever. When Elizabeth had gained this point, she dismissed her Parliament without delay, in a half-pathetic, half-vituperative speech from the throne; observing in the commencement of her harangue, "that although her lord keeper (Bacon) had addressed them, she remembered that a prince's own words bore more weight with them than those that were spoken by her command." She complained bitterly of "the dissimulation that she had found among them when she was herself all plainness. As for her successor," she said, "they might, perhaps, have a wiser or more learned to reign over them, but one more careful for their weal they could not have; but whether she ever lived to meet them again, or whoever it might be, she bade them beware how they again tried their prince's patience as they had done hers. And now, to conclude," said her majesty, "not meaning to make a Lent of Christmas, the most part of you may assure yourselves that you depart in your prince's grace."

In February, 1567, the horrible and mysterious murder of the unfortunate husband of Mary Queen of Scots took place, under circumstances artfully contrived by the perpetrators of this atrocious deed to fling a strong suspicion of the crime on their hapless sovereign.¹ Elizabeth's first impulse, on learning this tragic event, was to send Lady Howard and Lady Cecil to her ill-treated cousin, Lady Lennox, whom she had detained now two years a close prisoner in the Tower, to break to her the agonizing news of the calamity that had befallen her. In the evening she sent her own physician, Dr. Huick, to visit her, and the Dean of Westminster to offer her consolation. It is possible that if this experienced lady had been allowed to join her husband and son in Scotland, on the marriage of Mary with the latter, her counsels and mediation might have operated to pre-

vent most of those unhappy differences between the royal pair which were fomented by their mutual foes. Now that the worst that could befall had happened, Elizabeth restored Lady Lennox and her youngest son, Charles, to liberty, and treated her with tenderness and consideration. Both the countess and her husband having been led to believe that the Scottish queen was deeply implicated in the murder of their son, appealed to Elizabeth for vengeance, and especially to bring Bothwell to an open trial for his share in the transaction.

Elizabeth wrote, in the energetic spirit of a daughter of the Plantagenets, to her unhappy cousin Mary Stuart, conjuring her to act as became her in this frightful crisis. She says :—"For the love of God, madame, use such sincerity and prudence in this case, which touches you so nearly, that all the world may have reason to judge you innocent of so enormous a crime—a thing which unless you do you will be worthily blotted out from the rank of princesses, and rendered, not undeservedly, the opprobrium of the vulgar ; rather than which fate should befall you, I should wish you an honourable sepulchre, instead of a stained life." This letter was written at the instance of Darnley's father, the Earl of Lennox, who was desirous of having Bothwell's trial postponed till he could obtain further proofs of his guilt, but Mary was in the hands of Bothwell and his faction. Elizabeth's letter fell into the possession of Maitland, whose interest it was to suppress it, and there is reason to believe that it never reached her at all. Maitland attended Bothwell on his trial, and he was acquitted. Elizabeth, of course, received no answer to her letter, which might have led so acute a princess to suspect that it had been intercepted or detained, especially when she understood that it had passed into hands so suspicious as those of Maitland, whose falsehood she had good reason to know. However, it suited her policy to consider Mary as a State criminal, and she eagerly received the strong tide of circumstantial evidence as confirmation of her guilt. On the subject of Mary's marriage with Bothwell, Elizabeth expressed herself with great severity, not only on account of its appearing an outrage against every proper feeling, but because she anticipated

that an immediate league between the new consort of the Scottish queen and France would be the result. There can be little doubt but this would have been the case if Mary's marriage with that ruffian had been her own choice, or anything but the offspring of dire necessity. Mary's kindred and the Court of France treated him, by the advice of the ambassador, Du Croc, who was the friend and confidant of the hapless queen, with the scorn he merited. They would not acknowledge him in any way, therefore Elizabeth was very soon relieved from her apprehension of a dangerous coalition between Bothwell and France.

Relentlessly as Elizabeth had laboured to undermine the throne of Mary Stuart, she no sooner beheld it in dust, and the queen a degraded and heart-broken captive in the hands of the fierce oligarchy whom her machinations and her gold had spirited up against their sovereign, than her mind misgave her. The blow that had been successfully struck at her hated rival might rebound upon herself, by demonstrating to her own subjects the fact that crowned heads were amenable to the delegates of the people, not only for misgovernment, but for personal crimes—a principle which no Tudor sovereign could desire to see established in England. Yet she, Elizabeth, the most despotic monarch, save and except her father, that ever swayed the sceptre of this realm, had nourished the spirit of revolt against regal authority in the dominions of her neighbour, and for the sake of personal vengeance on a fairer woman than herself, had committed a political sin against her own privileged and peculiar class, by teaching others to set at nought

"The divinity
That hedges in a king."

The recent proceedings in Scotland, the movements of the Huguenots in France and in Flanders, were signs of the tendency of the times towards a general emancipation from the restraints which Governments and State creeds had imposed on the minds of men. The spiritual yoke of Rome had been broken in England and Scotland, and the elements of political revolution

were agitating the Western nations. Elizabeth had fed the flame for the sake of embarrassing the hostile sovereigns who were ready to impugn her title to the crown she wore, but she was the most arbitrary of all in her determination to crush the same spirit in her own realm. A party was, however, struggling into existence, whose object was to establish the right of senates to hold the sovereign in check, and Elizabeth already began to feel its influence.

Her own Parliament had recently opposed her will, and attempted to dictate to her the line of conduct they considered it was her duty to adopt, and if encouraged by the example of the successful revolt of Mary Stuart's subjects they might ere long treat herself with as little ceremony. In the first revulsion caused by these reflections, Elizabeth despatched Throckmorton to Scotland, on a mission of comfort to the captive queen, and of stern remonstrance to her former tools and pensioners—Murray and his triumphant faction.

Elizabeth was at this time amusing herself with the matrimonial negotiations which were actively renewed for her marriage with the Archduke Charles, youngest son of the Emperor Ferdinand I., and brother to Maximilian II., the reigning Emperor of Germany. The religion of the archduke was the only impediment to an alliance which Elizabeth is supposed to have considered with more complacency than any other of her numerous offers. The Earl of Sussex, her grand chamberlain, the well-known opponent of Leicester, was the ambassador in the treaty, and prosecuted his mission with great zeal, in hopes of giving a check to the absorbing favouritism of his adversary.

Elizabeth, however, knew her duty too well, as Queen of England, to introduce more jealousies among her people than those which were already fermenting around her. She ultimately refused the accomplished German, on account of diversity of religion. Sussex attributed the ill success of his mission to the paramount influence of Leicester, saying, "he knew who was at work in the vineyard at home, but if God should ever put it into his dear mistress's heart to divide the weeds from the grain, she would reap the better harvest here." Leicester's party

had already whispered that the archduke was devotedly attached to a German lady, and had a family of young children, for whose sake he would never marry.

While this negotiation was yet proceeding, events occurred in the sister realm of Scotland, which gave a new and strange colouring to the next twenty years of Elizabeth's life and reign. The unfortunate Queen of Scots having effected her escape from Lochleven Castle, her faithful friends rallied round her standard, but being intercepted and cut off by the rebel lords in her retreat to Dumbarton, she suffered a decisive defeat, May 13th, 1568, at the battle of Langside. She took the fatal resolution of throwing herself on the protection of Queen Elizabeth, to whom she wrote a touching letter from the Abbey of Dundrenan, assuring her that her sole dependence was on her friendship. "To remind you," concludes the royal fugitive, "of the reasons I have to depend on England, I send back to you, its queen, this token of her promised friendship and assistance." This was a diamond, in the form of a heart, which had been sent to her by Elizabeth as a pledge of her amity and goodwill.

Contrary to the advice of her friends, Mary, with the rash confidence of a queen of tragedy or romance, crossed the Frith of Solway in a fishing-boat, with Lord Herries and her little train, and on May 16th landed at Workington, in Cumberland. The next day she addressed an eloquent letter to Elizabeth, detailing briefly and rapidly the wrongs to which she had been subjected, her present sore distress, even for a change of apparel, and entreated to be conducted to her presence. Mary was recognised by the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and received an honourable welcome; and she was conducted to Carlisle with sufficient marks of affection and respect to excite the jealous ill-will of Elizabeth, who sent her own trusty kinsman, Sir Francis Knollys, and Lord Scrope, ostensibly to congratulate the royal fugitive in her name on her escape, but in effect to constitute her a prisoner. The hard, uncourteous manner in which, after a few deceitful compliments, this pair of statesmen behaved is sufficiently proved by the testimony of their own letters. Yet it is impossible to read those of Knollys

without being struck with his sagacious foresight of the evil results arising from Mary's detention. Although his comments are personally malicious to the Queen of Scots, and he omitted nothing that was calculated to excite Elizabeth's jealousy and suspicion against her, still he wisely deprecated her imprisonment in England, as alike impolitic and dishonourable.

Elizabeth, not contented with the detention of her unfortunate guest, endeavoured, by all the means she could devise, to obtain possession of Mary's infant son, the heir, as he subsequently proved, of both their realms. Could she have succeeded in getting this babe into her hands, she would then have had every living creature who stood in the line of the regal succession in her power.

Murray would not, however, resign the infant prince, in whose name alone he could exercise the regal power of Scotland ; for well he knew that Elizabeth's next step would be to make herself mistress of Scotland under the pretence of asserting the rights of the lawful heir. Independently of this her favourite project, Elizabeth, as the umpire chosen to decide the controversy between Mary Stuart and the faction by whom that queen had been dethroned, and branded with the crimes of adultery and murder, had a mighty political advantage in her power, if she could have resolved to fulfil her promises of friendship and protection to her hapless kinswoman. She was exactly in that position which would have enabled her to name her own terms with Mary, as the price of re-establishing her on the throne of Scotland. The predominant faction, for it was no more, (since Mary had a strong party in her favour, ready to peril all in her behalf, and others willing to befriend her, yet fearing to expose themselves to the malice of her enemies, unless some visible protection encouraged them,) dared not have acted in opposition to the fiat of the armed umpire they had chosen, whose troops were ready to pour over the Border, and even then occupied some of the fortresses of the frontiers. Elizabeth could have negotiated a pardon for her old confederates and pensioners—could have replaced Mary in a moderate exercise of the regal power of Scotland, and established herself in the dignity maintained by the monarchs

of England in the olden times, even that of Bretwalda, or paramount-suzerain, of the Britannic empire. She preferred gratifying personal revenge to the aggrandizement of her realm and the exaltation of her glory both as a sovereign and a woman, and committed an enormous political blunder, as well as a crime, by the useless turpitude of her conduct to Mary Stuart.

From the moment, too, that she resolved on the unjustifiable detention of the royal fugitive, her own peace of mind was forfeited ; she had sown the hydra's teeth in the hitherto peaceful soil of her own realm, and they sprang up to vex her with plots, foreign and domestic, open revolts, and secret confederacies, in which her ancient nobility were deeply involved. The loving welcome that merry Carlisle and its neighbouring magnates, the chivalric aristocracy of the Border, had given to the beautiful and fascinating heiress-presumptive to the crown, early filled Elizabeth and her council with jealous uneasiness, and Mary was removed, sorely against her will, to Bolton Castle, in Yorkshire, the seat of Lord Scrope, to whose charge she was consigned.

In August, contrary to her first decision, and to the advice of her faithful counsellors, Mary agreed to submit her cause to the decision of the English commissioners appointed by Elizabeth. The conferences were opened at York, where Murray and his confederates urged not only their old accusations against their sovereign, but produced the far-famed silver-gilt casket and its contents, the sonnets and letters which they asserted Mary had written to Bothwell. They refused to allow Mary herself to see these, neither was she permitted to appear, according to her own earnest desire, to confront and cross-question her accusers. So impressed, however, was the president of the commission, the premier peer of England, Elizabeth's maternal kinsman, the Duke of Norfolk, of the innocence of the Scottish queen, that he was willing to trust his own honour in her hands, and actually pronounced the fullest sentence of acquittal that mortal judge could do, by seeking her for his wife. It is true that he had seen her at Carlisle, and was captivated by her beauty ; but if any portion of the horrible and vulgar letters purporting to have been written by Mary to Bothwell could have been proved, a

revulsion of feeling in the breast of Norfolk must have been the result, which would have taught him to regard her with sentiments of horror, instead of the love and reverence for her virtues which attended him to the block, and was transmitted by him as a legacy to his equally unfortunate son, Philip Earl of Arundel. Elizabeth herself, after she had considered the evidences, pronounced that she had seen nothing proved on either side, and broke up the conferences.

As early as November, 1568, Norfolk disclosed to Maitland his desire of a union with the captive queen, and suffered himself to be deluded by his pretended friendship, and the wiles of the treacherous Leicester and Murray, who induced him to believe that they were desirous of bringing this matter to pass. The project was revealed by them to Elizabeth, who caused Mary to be immediately transferred from the keeping of Lord Scrope, whose lady was the sister of the enamoured duke, to the gloomy and noxious fortress of Tutbury, where she was subjected to many harsh restraints, her train diminished, and herself placed under the ungentle jailership of the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury.

Writers have been found to justify the injurious treatment to which Mary Stuart was subjected in England, on the plea that she, as a foreign sovereign, might, by the laws of nations, be constituted a prisoner, because she entered Elizabeth's realm without having obtained permission to do so. Cecil, her great enemy, far from using so paltry an excuse, has written in his barristerial argument on her side, "She is to be helped because she came willingly into the realm, upon trust of the queen's majesty." Secondly, he says, and this convicts Elizabeth of perfidy which requires no comment, "She trusted in the queen's majesty's help, because she had, in her trouble, received many messages to that effect."

If all the pens in the world were employed in the defence of Elizabeth's conduct, they could not obliterate the stain which that incontrovertible record of her treachery has left upon her memory.

In justice to Elizabeth, however, be it recorded, that when the Countess of Lennox, with passionate tears, presented a petition

to her, entreating, in the name of herself and husband, that the Queen of Scots might be proceeded against for the death of their son, Lord Darnley, the natural subject of the English sovereign, her majesty, after graciously soothing the afflicted mother, told her, "that she could not, without evident proof, accuse a princess, and her near kinswoman, of so great a crime, significantly reminding her that the times were evil, and hatred blind, imputing often offences to persons of exalted ranks of which they were innocent." The Countess of Lennox was ultimately convinced that her daughter-in-law, the Queen of Scots, was wholly guiltless of Darnley's death, and continued, till she died, in friendly correspondence with her.

CHAPTER VI

Elizabeth puts the Spanish ambassador under arrest—Speaks angrily of the Queen of Scots—Writes to that princess—Negotiations for Elizabeth's marriage with the King of France—Remonstrances of the nobles with Leicester—Arrest of Norfolk—Northern rebellion—Her sanguinary orders—Elizabeth excommunicated by Pius V.—Conspiracies against her—Attempts to renew matrimonial treaty with the archduke—Anger at his marriage—Henri of Anjou proposed to her—Her wish of accepting him—Demurs of her council—Her anger—Her visit to Sir Thomas Gresham—Names the Royal Exchange—Her conversation with the French ambassador on marriage—Her new favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton—Intrigues against her marriage—Reluctance of her suitor—Forbids George Strickland to appear in his place in Parliament—Contumaciousness of the Duke of Anjou—Vexation of his mother—Archduke Rodolph offers to Elizabeth

ELIZABETH was at this time on terms approaching to open hostility with Spain. She had opened her arms as a protectress to the fugitives of the reformed faith, whom the cruelties of the terrible Alva, in the Low Countries, had compelled to abandon their homes. The persecuted Hollanders fondly regarded her as the representative of her royal ancestress, Queen Philippa, one of the co-heiresses of William, Count of Holland and Hainault. The first movements of the furious war which separated "those

whom the rod of Alva bruised" from the Crown of Spain commenced in this year.

Meantime, Elizabeth's ambassador at the Court of Philip II., Dr. Man, instead of attending to the business of his legation, had, in a fit of spiritual Quixotism, defied the Pope, in such undiplomatic terms of vituperation that he was prohibited from appearing at the Court of his Catholic majesty and banished to a very uncivilized village, where he was compelled to hear mass. The English flag had also been insulted in the Gulf of Mexico, by the attack and capture of three ships in the fleet of the mercantile adventurers, commanded by the famous—or, rather, we should say the infamous—Sir John Hawkins, since he was the first man who brought the odious stain of the slave trade on this nation—a traffic that to her eternal disgrace was sanctioned—nay, even encouraged—by Queen Elizabeth. The high spirit of this princess was greatly chafed at the twofold affront she and her subjects had received from Spain, nor was it long before she had an opportunity of making reprisals.

Four Spanish vessels bound to Flanders, laden with specie, were chased by French pirates into the ports of Plymouth, Falmouth, and Southampton. Don Guerran d'Espes, the new Spanish ambassador, applied to the English Government for further protection for these vessels, which was granted ; but the French adventurers having made a fresh attempt to seize the ships, the queen ordered the treasure to be brought to London, for she had ascertained that it was the property of a company of Genoese merchants, who were about to establish a bank at Antwerp, and to assist Alva with a loan. No sooner did she understand this arrangement, than she determined to frustrate it, by appropriating the loan to her own use. D'Espes, in great anger, informed Alva of the seizure of the money ; and Alva, exasperated at the disappointment, wrote a brief and peremptory letter to Elizabeth, demanding restitution. She replied, very coolly, "that she understood the treasure was private property, and had borrowed it ; but if the King of Spain could prove that it belonged to him, she would restore it."

Alva retorted, by laying an embargo on all English subjects

and English property in Antwerp ; and Elizabeth, not to be outdone, put all the Spaniards in her dominions under arrest, not even excepting the person of the ambassador, whom she constituted a prisoner in his own house, and appointed three gentlemen of her Court to keep guard over him.

On January 24th, 1568, arrived an envoy from the Duke of Alva, named Assolveville, to enter into explanations with the queen on the subject of the recent misunderstanding. Elizabeth was encouraged by this indication of placability to assume a more offensive attitude, and to show that she was prepared for war, and that she considered it was already commenced. Before Assolveville could present his credentials, she caused him to be arrested at Rochester, where he was detained two days, that he might see her grand arsenal, the activity of her military preparations, and the great number of workmen who were employed in building her mighty ships of war at Chatham. She then had him conducted to London, separated him from all his people, and placed him in a lodging of her own providing, under a strict guard, without allowing him to see or speak to any one, much less the Spanish ambassador, with whom he was of course desirous of conferring before he proceeded to open a negotiation with the queen.

Assolveville, guessing what the event would be, had previously written a letter to D'Espes, which he smuggled to him under cover to the French ambassador, and another addressed to Queen Elizabeth, requesting to be informed of the time and place where he might present his credentials. This, however, was forcibly torn by Cecil from the hand of the Spanish gentleman who was waiting in the queen's presence-chamber for an opportunity of presenting it, warning him, rudely enough, not to be found there any more. The object of all this was, to compel the poor envoy to unfold his business to some of the council before he had received his cue from his own ambassador, who was still a prisoner in his own house ; but Assolveville, with laudable obstinacy, refused to open his lips to any one till he had communicated with D'Espes.

Elizabeth, meantime, indited an elaborate letter to Philip II.,

in Latin, in which, after commending herself for the care she had taken "to save his money from the pirates, and put it out of danger," she imputed all that the Duke of Alva and his ambassador had done to the evil counsel of those who would wish to see a breach in the amity and good faith which had hitherto united them.

Philip, however, assumed a high tone, and approved of all that had been done by Alva and D'Espes, and demanded the restitution of his money, under the threat of a war. Elizabeth was at that moment in an awkward predicament; she had, by her intrigues with the insurgents in France, so embroiled herself with that Government, that hostilities appeared inevitable, and, at the same time, a formidable rebellion was organizing among the old Catholic nobility in her own realm, while her merchants loudly complained of the injury done to commerce by the seizures of English property, which had been heedlessly provoked in the ports of France and Spain.

In fact, it appeared scarcely possible to avoid a war with both. Each sovereign complained of mutual grievances. Elizabeth aided the Queen of Navarre incipiently, her subjects helped her openly, and this princess was virtually queen of the South, and of all the Protestants in France. The goldsmiths in England, it was supposed, had lent the Queen of Navarre money on her jewels; and, after the disastrous battle of Moncortour, Elizabeth had offered, in case the King of France proved too strong for the Protestant cause, to give refuge to her and her daughter Catherine, the Princess of Condé, and her little ones in England.

On the other hand, the King of France, by way of reprisal, supported the partizans of Mary Queen of Scots, who was regarded as the rightful queen by most of the Roman Catholics in the British Islands.

On February 10th, the French ambassador, La Mothe Fénelon, in an audience with Elizabeth, informed her that a gentleman in the service of the Queen of Scots had complained to him of the rigour with which his royal mistress had been treated, on her compulsory removal from Bolton to Tutbury.

His excellency, with manly plainness, represented "that those who advised her majesty to put constraint, not only on the will, but the royal person of a sovereign and her kinswoman, made her do a wrong to her own reputation." He then besought her "to cause the Scottish queen to be treated in such a manner, in the place where she had compelled her to go, that she might have occasion to speak of her with praise in her letters to the King and Queen of France."

Elizabeth replied, with some choler, "that she had neither used force nor violence to the Queen of Scotland, having merely removed her to a place where she would be better treated than at Bolton, where all the necessaries of life were scarce." She also gave, as a reason for what she had done, that Mary had written into Scotland a letter which had fallen into her hands, requiring some of the lords of her country to take up arms and make an inroad to where she was at Bolton—that she had, in the same letter, accused her of having treated with the Earl of Murray to have him declared legitimate, with several other things equally false.

Elizabeth told La Mothe that he might assure their majesties of France that the Queen of Scots received nothing else but good treatment at her hands, and although it was not for her to render account to any person in the world for her actions, it was her wish to justify herself to all the world in respect to her usage of the Queen of Scots, that all other princes might know that she proceeded with such rectitude that she had no cause to change her pale hue for anything that could be brought against her on that account. "Would to God," added she, "that the Queen of Scots had no more occasion to blush at that which could be seen of her."

La Mothe replied, "that her majesty had it in her power to convince the world of the unprincipled ambition of the adversaries of the said lady, and to explain all that they could urge against her ; and if she acted as the duty of queen to queen, and relation to relation prescribed, it would prove that she was innocent of all the unkindness that had been imputed to her."

Elizabeth, instead of making any direct reply to this home

stroke, merely observed, "that she had never had any praise from the Queen of Scots for any of the good offices she had rendered her," and then turned the conversation to the subject of Rouen, and the seizure that had been made of English property by the French Government.

Elizabeth's great dread, in the perilous year for Protestantism, 1569, was a Catholic coalition throughout Europe in behalf of her royal prisoner. Ireland was in a state of revolt, the northern counties progressing to the same; the Protestant cause had received two severe blows, the retreat of the Prince of Orange, and the victory of the Duke of Anjou at Jarnac. Jealousy between the Courts of France and Spain had proved her safeguard hitherto, but there was a prospect of a new bond of union, in the proposed marriages of Charles IX. and Philip II., now again a widower, with the daughters of the Emperor Maximilian.

Elizabeth thought it possible to prevent this brotherly alliance by a little coquetry, on her own account, with Charles IX. Her hand had been twice solicited by the plenipotentiaries of that prince, and she had declined because of his tender youth. His majesty was now really marriageable, though much too young to be a suitable consort for her; yet she might, without committing herself too deeply, contrive to lure him from his imperial *fiancée*. Catherine de Medicis' favourite project was to marry her second son, the Duke of Anjou, to Elizabeth; and that able intriguer, La Mothe Fénélon, had instructions to bring this matter to pass, if possible. With this design constantly in view, the conversations between him and her majesty of England invariably turned to the subject of matrimony.

The French ambassador, however, subjoined to his despatches a dissertation on the queen's real intentions regarding marriage, and it is certain the result bore out his view of the subject. "It is the general opinion," he wrote, "that Queen Elizabeth will never marry; but when her subjects press her to name her successor, she meets the inconvenient proposal by a feigned intention of entering into some marriage she never means to

conclude ;” and he brought, as an instance, the late futile negotiation regarding the Archduke Charles.

The Earl of Arundel, who had been for many years a suitor for the hand of Queen Elizabeth, made no scruple of declaring that the intimacy between her and the Earl of Leicester was the reason of her refusing all her suitors, whether they were foreign princes or English peers. This great noble, according to the report of the French ambassador, instigated his son-in-law, the Duke of Norfolk, to call Leicester to a sharp account for familiarities with the queen which they affirmed disgraced them all, as Englishmen, as well as the crown she wore, and that neither the English nobility nor her subjects in general would permit the continuance of such proceedings.

They exhorted Leicester “to be candid, and say if the queen really wished to marry him, and then they would both unite their influence with the nobility and the rest of the nation to sanction their honourable union, and stop all this scandal.”

Leicester, the arrogant Leicester, seems to have assumed the humble tone of a chidden inferior to these two great peers. He thanked them both for their offer and for their warning ; he acknowledged “that the queen had shown him such good affection as had emboldened him to use some well-intentioned familiarities, in the hope of espousing her ;” he assured the Duke of Norfolk “that he had, by this offer of assistance, laid him under the greatest obligation in the world, and at the same time had done his duty well to the queen and the Crown, as a faithful vassal and counsellor ought, and during the remainder of his life he would never forget the same.” Neither, according to Bishop Goodman, did he ever forget that Norfolk had once bestowed on him a box on the ear.

Till Norfolk subsequently laid his head on the block, there is little doubt this conversation was duly remembered by Leicester, as well as the unlucky box on the ear. He assuredly understood the intentions of Norfolk and Arundel as well as they did themselves. Arundel had long wooed Queen Elizabeth ; Norfolk, who had previously married his heiress, was the father of a son, who was, at the same time, heir of Arundel, and a mutual

bond between them ; Norfolk was a widower, and the secret suitor of Mary Queen of Scots. Thus a strong family compact already existed between these noblemen, the two greatest of the ancient English aristocracy ; and if the earl wedded Queen Elizabeth, the actual possessor of the English crown, and the duke the Queen of Scotland, and heiress of the whole island, they might well deem that their united strength might have defied the sons of little men, whom the Tudor monarchs had called from the shears and the forge, to guide the civil and religious government of England.

It was the policy of the two great nobles, Norfolk and Arundel, to clear their path of the favourite, as a matrimonial pretender to the hand of Elizabeth ; and, according to La Mothe's letter, this measure was speedily effected. "Some days after," he resumes, "the *said lady* (meaning Queen Elizabeth), being earnestly pressed to declare her intentions respecting the Earl of Leicester, resolutely answered, 'that she *pretended* not to marriage with him.' Since this reply, both have conducted themselves more modestly, and he has withdrawn the expensive parade he made while he had hopes of success in his enterprise."

The treachery of Leicester's conduct with regard to the Duke of Norfolk, and the other noblemen he had been the means of drawing into the snare he had planned for their destruction, by his pretended desire of the marriage of Norfolk to the Queen of Scots, appears a dark picture of the principles of Elizabeth's Cabinet. Leicester had a two-fold object in view—the destruction of his great enemy, Sussex, as well as that of Norfolk. Sussex, who was related in the same degree by his mother, Lady Elizabeth Howard, to Norfolk and to the queen, had undoubtedly favoured the idea of a marriage between Norfolk and the Queen of Scots ; but when he found the dangerous tendency of some of the ramifications of the plot, he recoiled from it, as inconsistent with his duty to his sovereign. Elizabeth was, at first, incensed against him, but though not honest herself either in word or deed, she knew how to estimate those who were, and finally confided to her plain-dealing kinsman the command of the forces appointed to quell the northern insurgents.

Leicester had encouraged the duke to hope for the accomplishment of his wishes by undertaking to obtain the queen's consent, but put off, from day to day, mentioning the matter. Cecil, observing the perplexity of the duke, advised him to seek her majesty, and reveal to her the matter he had on his mind, whatever it might be. If Norfolk could have resolved to do this, it would probably have saved his life ; but instead of acting without delay on this judicious advice, he sought counsel of Leicester, who dissuaded him from that course, and promised to name it to her majesty the next time she went to walk in the fields.

Then followed the contemptible farce of Leicester's feigned sickness at Tichfield, and his message to the queen that he could not die in peace without confessing his faults, and obtaining her pardon for his guilt. Elizabeth hastened to his bedside, and he acknowledged with many sighs and tears, how deeply he had sinned against her, by being privy to a design of marrying her foe, the Queen of Scots, to the Duke of Norfolk ; and under pretence of making a clear conscience put her into possession of the whole of the circumstances of the plot, in which many of the principal nobles of the realm were implicated.

There was no proof, however, that any attempt against either the life or Government of Elizabeth was contemplated ; it was simply a plan for the restoration of Mary to liberty, and royal dignity, by becoming the wife of the great Protestant English peer, whom her own rebels of the reformed faith had first solicited to unite himself with her. The treacherous Leicester probably led Elizabeth to suppose that much more was intended. The next time her majesty saw the duke, she called him to her in the gallery, and sharply reprimanded him for presuming to attempt a match with the Queen of Scots without her cognizance, and commanded him on his allegiance, to give over these pretensions. The duke promised to do so, and proudly added, "that his estate in England was worth little less than the whole realm of Scotland, in the ill state to which the wars had reduced it ; and that when he was in his own tennis-court at Norwich, he thought himself as great as a king."

The next day the queen refused the suit of the Spanish

ambassador, for the liberation of her royal prisoner, observing, at the same time, "that she would advise the Queen of Scots to bear her condition with less impatience, or she might chance to find some of those on whom she relied, shorter by the head."

Norfolk now found his situation at Court intolerable. The queen regarded him with looks of anger and disdain, and Leicester and all his former associates treated him with studied insolence. He endeavoured to avoid collision with those who sought to force a quarrel, by returning with his father-in-law, the Earl of Arundel, and the Earl of Pembroke, first to London, and afterwards to his princely seat at Kenninghall, in Norfolk, whence he wrote an apologetic letter to the queen, attributing his departure "to the pain he felt at her displeasure, and his mortification at the treatment to which he had been subjected by the insolence of his foes, by whom he had been made a common table talk."

The queen sent a peremptory order for his return to Court, which the duke obeyed, and was arrested by her order at Burnham, three miles from Windsor, and committed to the Tower. He was subjected to an examination before Lord-Keeper Bacon, Northampton, Sadler, Bedford, and Cecil; but they reported to her majesty that the duke had not put himself under the penalty of the law by any overt act of treason, and that it would be difficult to convict him without this.

"Away!" she replied; "what the law fails to do, my authority shall effect." Her rage was so ungovernable that she fell into a fit, and they were forced to apply vinegar and other stimulants to revive her.

The arrest of Norfolk precipitated the disastrous rising in the North, under the luckless Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland. The re-establishment of Catholicism in England was the object of this insurrection; Mary Stuart, as the Catholic heiress of the crown, and exciting by her beauty and misfortunes, her persecutions and her patience, the deepest interest among the chivalry of the North, who were chiefly professors of the same creed, was the watchword and leading point of the association.

The rebel earls entered Durham in warlike array, Novem-

ber 14th ; Richard Norton, of Norton Conyers, who had married the sister of Queen Katharine Parr's second husband, Neville, Lord Latimer, a hoary-headed gentleman, aged seventy-one, bore the banner of the cross before the insurgents.

"The Nortons ancient had the cross,
And the five wounds our Lord did bear."

The principal exploits of the misguided multitude who followed this banner consisted in burning the translations of the Scriptures and the liturgies, in all the towns they passed through. They had neither plan, order, nor money to maintain themselves in the rash position they had assumed. A few days sufficed the Earl of Sussex to crush the insurrection. The two earls fled ; Northumberland to Scotland, where, falling into the hands of Murray, he was sold to the English Government, and brought to the block ; Westmoreland took refuge in Flanders, and died in exile. Besides the executions of such of the leaders of the rebellion as fell into her hands, Elizabeth compelled her victorious general, Sussex, to deluge the northern counties with the blood of the simple, unreflective peasants, who had been induced to join the revolt. Staunch, indeed, must be the admirers of good Queen Bess who can calmly peruse the following order for the hangings in Richmondshire without a shudder :—

"THE EARL OF SUSSEX TO SIR GEORGE BOWES.

"SIR GEORGE BOWES,—I have set the numbers to be executed down in every town, as I did in your other book, which draweth near to two hundred ; wherein you may use your discretion in taking more or less in every town, as you shall see just cause for the offences and fitness for example ; so as, in the whole, you pass not of all kind of such the number of two hundred, amongst whom you may not execute any that hath freeholds, or noted wealthy, for so is the queen's majesty's pleasure. By her special commandment, 10th of January, 1569-70.

"T. SUSSEX."

Under the list of those who joined from each town and village, the Earl of Sussex has written the number to be executed, amounting to every fifth man.

The richer sort purchased their lives, but no less than eight hundred of the working classes perished by the hands of the

executioner ! Leicester had expressed a great wish to march against the rebels, but the queen detained him as her principal adviser and protector in case of danger.

Early in the spring of 1570 Pope Pius V. published his bull of excommunication against Queen Elizabeth, and on the morning of May 15th a copy of this anathema against the sovereign was found fixed on the gates of the Bishop of London's palace in St. Paul's. After strict search, a duplicate was discovered in the possession of a student of Lincoln's Inn ; who, being put to the torture, confessed that he received it from Mr. Felton, a rich Catholic gentleman of Southwarl Felton, on being apprehended, not only acknowledged that he had set up the bull on the Bishop of London's gate, but gloried in the daring act, bore the rack without betraying his accomplices, and went to the scaffold in the spirit of a martyr. As the purport of the bull was to deprive Elizabeth of the title of queen, and the allegiance of her subjects, Felton gave her no other title than "the pretender ;" but at his execution he said, "he begged her pardon if he had injured her," and drawing a magnificent diamond ring, value four hundred pounds, from his finger, requested the Earl of Sussex, who was present, to give it to her in his name, as a token that he died in peace with her, bearing her no malice for his sufferings and death.

This bull caused little mischief, but great annoyance, to Elizabeth ; she even condescended to solicit the Emperor Maximilian to procure its revocation. A sarcastic query from the pontiff in reply to the imperial intervention was the only result of this undignified proceeding on the part of the head of the Protestant Church. In August the plague broke out in London, and some deaths having occurred in the Tower, Elizabeth was induced to release the Duke of Norfolk, on his promising to give up all future correspondence with the Queen of Scots, and attempts in her behalf. He was then allowed to return to his own mansion at the Charterhouse, where he remained for a time as a prisoner at large, under the charge of his friend, Sir Henry Neville.

On the assassination of the Scottish regent, Murray, Elizabeth was urged by the friends of the captive Queen of Scots, both in France and Scotland, to reinstate her in her royal authority, under certain conditions, which might have been rendered of great political advantage to England, but those demanded by Elizabeth were neither in Mary's power, nor consistent with her honour to perform, especially as the *sine qua non* was, that she should give up her infant son, who had been crowned King of Scotland, as her principal hostage. The possession of this princely babe had been the great object of Elizabeth's intrigues, almost from the time of his birth, but neither Mary nor the lords of the congregation would hear of trusting him to her keeping. "The times," says Camden, "were then full of suspicions and conspiracies," for Thomas and Edward Stanley, the two younger sons of the Earl of Derby by the Duke of Norfolk's daughter, with Sir Thomas Gerard, Rolston, Hall, and others of the county of Derby, conspired to free the Queen of Scots out of prison; but Rolston's son betrayed the confederacy, and the parties were arrested, except Hall, who fled to Scotland, where he was afterwards taken, at the fall of Dumbarton Castle, and put to death in London. Mary's ambassador, the Bishop of Ross, being implicated in this plot, was once more sent to the Tower. Elizabeth had taken a terrible vengeance on the Border counties of Scotland, for the encouragement the partisans of the Queen of Scots, there, had given to the rebels in the north of England, for she caused Sussex, with a military force, to burn and lay waste nearly three hundred villages. These cruelties were regarded as so many triumphs by those who heard of the progress made by the unresisted bands of England, and saw not the misery caused by the inglorious work of destruction that was perpetrated.

The twelfth year of Elizabeth's reign being now completed, the anniversary of her accession was celebrated as a general festival throughout her dominions. The aspect of public affairs was, however, still gloomy, the unsettled state of the succession was more alarming to the nation than ever, and

Elizabeth herself began to consider that the only chance of putting an end to the plots and intrigues of the partisans of Mary Stuart would be the birth of heirs of her own. Her attempt to attract the young King of France from the Austrian princess had only procured a few empty compliments from the ambassador ; and, even if the king had not been too deeply pledged to his affianced bride to avail himself of the opening she had given him, Elizabeth was well aware that the obstacles to such a union were insuperable. But that she did regret having been induced by Cecil and Leicester to trifle with the addresses of the Archduke Charles, there is abundant proof, and even that she was anxious "to lure the tercel gentil back again."

In the secret minutes of the affairs of the Court of England, prepared by the *Sieur de Vassal*, one of *Fénelon's* spies, for the information of the Queen-mother of France, it is stated that, after the announcement had been made to her that the marriages of her two rejected royal suitors, the Kings of France and Spain, with the daughters of the emperor, were concluded, Elizabeth became very pensive ; and when she retired to her chamber, with her ladies, she complained "that, while so many honourable marriages were making in Europe, not one of her council had spoken of a match for her, but if the Earl of Sussex had been present, he, at least, might have reminded them of the Archduke Charles."

This being repeated by one of the ladies to the Earl of Leicester, he was compelled, on the morrow, to endeavour to please her, by taking measures to renew the negotiations with the archduke ; the son of Sir Henry Cobham was forthwith despatched, on a secret mission to *Spires*, for that purpose. In the meantime, she showed more and more inclination to marry, and spoke with so much affection of the archduke that the earl repented having taken any further steps in the matter.

The juvenile appearance of the functionary whom Elizabeth had selected for this delicate business excited some surprise, both at home and abroad, for it was said that, "if so grave and experienced a statesman as the Earl of Sussex had failed to

arrange a matrimonial treaty to her majesty's satisfaction, it was scarcely to be expected that a beardless boy, of no weight, would be able to effect much." The youthful Mercury, however, opened the object of his mission to the emperor with all possible solemnity, by informing him "that his royal mistress had sent him to continue the same negotiation that had been commenced, three years before, by the Earl of Sussex ; that she had not been able, till the present moment, to render a decisive answer on the proposal of the archduke, by reason of frequent illnesses, the wars in France and Flanders, and other impediments ; but this delay had not, she trusted, put an end to the suit of his imperial majesty's brother, and if he would be pleased to come to England now, he should be very welcome ; and as to the differences in their religion, she hoped that her subjects would consent that he and his attendants should have such full exercise of their own, and that he would be satisfied."

The emperor replied, "that his brother was very sorry that her majesty had been so tardy in notifying her good intention to him, for which he was nevertheless very much obliged, but that the prince, not supposing that her majesty would have delayed her answer for three years, if she had intended to accept him, had turned his thoughts on another match, and was now engaged to a princess, his relation and a Catholic, with whom there could be no disputes on the subject of religion, but that he regretted that he had not been accepted by the queen at the proper time, and hoped that she would henceforward regard him in the light of a brother." His imperial majesty concluded with a few compliments, on his own account, to the queen, and dismissed young Cobham with the present of a silver vessel.

This reply was taken in such evil part by Elizabeth, that she exclaimed, in her first indignation, "that the emperor had offered her so great an insult, that if she had been a man instead of a woman, she would have defied him to single combat."

Elizabeth had, however, reached that point when, in common with every childless sovereign who is on ill terms with the successor to the crown, she felt that her power was checked, and her influence bounded within comparatively narrow limits,

by the want of heirs of her own person. This consideration appears, if we may believe her own assertion, to have inclined her to encourage thoughts of marriage, and the offer of the young, handsome Henry of Valois came at the seasonable juncture, when she was burning with indignation at the marriage of the Archduke Charles. "After the said Cobham had returned with the answer of refusal," says the *Sieur de Vassal*, "she began to listen with more affection to the proposal of monsieur."

This prince was the second surviving son of Henry II. and Catherine de Medicis, and had just completed his eighteenth year. Elizabeth was turned of thirty-seven, and had been, in her infancy, proposed as a wife for his uncle, Charles, Duke of Angoulême. The project for her marriage with the Duke of Anjou seems to have been first suggested by the Cardinal Chastillon, who, notwithstanding his high rank in the Church of Rome, came to England for the purpose of soliciting the mediation of Elizabeth in a pacific treaty between the King of France and the Huguenots.

It is probable that this liberal-minded ecclesiastic imagined that the union of the heir of France with the Protestant Queen of England would procure a general toleration for persons of her religion in France, and that her influence and power would be amicably exerted to compose the stormy elements whose strife was pregnant with every species of crime and misery.

He took the first opportunity of touching on this project during a private conference with Elizabeth at Hampton Court, as soon as the fact of the archduke's marriage transpired, and received sufficient encouragement to induce him to open the matter to the queen-mother, who, on October 20th, wrote to La Mothe Fénelon, "that the Cardinal de Chastillon had spoken to her son, the Duke of Anjou, of an overture of marriage between him and the Queen of England, and she was earnest with him to give it all the encouragement in his power."

Towards the end of December, La Mothe Fénelon paid a visit to the Queen at Hampton Court; he was introduced into her privy chamber by Leicester, "where he found her better dressed

than usual, and she appeared eager to talk of the king's (Charles IX.) wedding." La Mothe told her "that he could wish to congratulate her on her own." On which she reminded him "that she had formerly assured him that she never meant to marry," but added, "that she regretted that she had not thought in time about her want of posterity, and that if she ever did take a husband, it should be only one of a royal house, of suitable rank to her own."

Some weeks later Elizabeth summoned her council, and communicated her matrimonial prospects to them in a truly original style. She began by informing them "that the Cardinal Chastillon had inquired of her three things: 'first, if she were free from all contracts, with power to marry where she pleased? secondly, whether she intended to marry within her own realm, or to espouse a foreigner? and, thirdly, in case it was her will to take a foreigner for her consort, if she would accept monsieur, brother to the King of France?'" and that she had replied to these questions, "that she was free to marry, but that she would not marry one of her subjects, and that she would, with all her heart, enter into a marriage with monsieur, on such conditions as might be deemed advisable." She then went on to say that the cardinal had presented his credentials from the king, and prayed her, as the affair was of great consequence to the world, that she would communicate with her council on the subject before it went any further. "But this," her majesty said, "she could tell them plainly, she had not thought good, and had replied, 'that she was queen-sovereign, and did not depend on those of her council, but rather they on her, as having their lives and their heads in her hand, and that they would, of course, do as she wished;' but inasmuch as he had represented to her the inconveniences which had been considered to result to the late queen, her sister, for having chosen to treat of her marriage with the King of Spain without consulting her council, she had promised him that she would propose it to them, and she willed that they should all promptly give her their advice."

The members of the council hung their heads in silence, being scarcely less startled at the gracious terms in which their

maiden monarch had thought proper to signify her intentions, with regard to this new suitor, than astonished at the fact that the affair had proceeded to such lengths ; for so secretly had the negotiations been kept, that very few of them had an idea that such a thing was in agitation. At length, after a considerable pause, one of the most courageous ventured to say that "Monsieur appeared to be very young for her majesty."

"What then !" exclaimed Elizabeth, fiercely interrupting him, "if the prince be satisfied with me ?" and then, apparently desirous of averting the unwelcome discussion of her age, she concluded by saying "that the cardinal, after showing his credentials, had proposed several articles of an advantageous nature, which she considered well worthy of attention."

The reason of Elizabeth's imperious language to her council on this occasion may be attributed to the displeasure she had cherished against those who opposed obstacles to her marriage with the archduke, which had ended in his abandoning his suit to her, and wedding the Bavarian princess.

If we may believe the *Sieur de Vassal* and *La Mothe Fénelon*, when the *Baron de Vualfrind* was presented to her, she expressed herself with mingled jealousy and disdain on the subject of the archduke's nuptials. She inveighed with strong reprobation on a marriage between such near relations as uncle and niece, observing "that the King of Spain, as a great prince, possibly considered that his example might be a law to the world, but that it was a law against Heaven." According to the same authority, she so far forgot the dignity of the queen and the delicacy of the woman as to add, "that the archduke was much obliged to her for refusing him, since he had found a better than her, and where love could not fail, for if they could not love each other as spouses, they might love as relations ; and that she also hoped, on her part, to find better than him, and so the regret would cease on both sides." Then she went on to say, "that she had not refused him, but only delayed her answer, and he had not been willing to wait ; but, nevertheless, she loved and honoured the emperor and all his house, without any exceptions."

One of the proudest and happiest days of Elizabeth's queenly life was January 23rd, 1571, when she came in state into the city, to dine with that prince of English merchants, Sir Thomas Gresham, who had invited her to open the new Bourse, on Cornhill, which he had built at his own expense, for the benefit of his fellow-citizens.

The queen had not visited the city of London for upwards of two years, on account of the pestilence ; of which, like her father, Henry VIII., she was always in great dread. The welcome which she received on this occasion, from her loving lieges in the east, was enthusiastically affectionate. La Mothe Fénelon, who accompanied her majesty, as an invited guest, to "the festival of the Bourse," as he terms it, bears testimony, in his letters to his own Court, to the magnificence of the preparations that had been made in the city in honour of her coming, "which," he says, "were no less splendid than on the day of her coronation. She was received everywhere by throngs of acclaiming people ; the streets were hung and garlanded ; and all things in the same order as at her first public entrance. It gave her great pleasure," continues he, "that I assisted on this occasion, because it showed more of her grandeur that such a display should be so suddenly arranged, than if it had been premeditated, and got up some time beforehand. The said lady did not omit to make me remark the affection and devotion with which she is looked upon by this great people."

The queen, attended by the principal nobles and ladies of her Court, and the friendly representative of the King of France, on her homeward route through Cornhill, entered the Bourse on the south side, and visited with great interest every part of the edifice, in which she beheld, not only a monument of the generosity and public spirit of her civic kinsman, but a pledge of the increasing greatness of her city of London ; and after expressing herself with eloquent and gracious words in commendation of all she saw, especially the Pawn, where the richest display was made, she gave it the name of the ROYAL EXCHANGE, and caused proclamation to that effect to be made by sound of trumpet. She remained till about eight o'clock, and was

escorted in great state through the illuminated streets, which were lined on each side by torch-bearers ; the whole population, indeed, supplied themselves with torches on this occasion to do her honour, and surrounded and followed her with tumultuous acclamations of joy.

Her majesty asked Monsieur De la Mothe, "if this did not, in a small way, remind him of the late rejoicings in Paris, at the public entrance of the king his master ?" She then observed, "that it did her heart good to see herself so much beloved and desired by her subjects ;" and added, "that she knew they had no other cause for regret than that they knew her to be mortal, and that they had no certainty of a successor, born of her, to reign over them after her death." The courteous statesman replied, with an outpouring of compliments to this pathetic boast, "that her majesty would be without excuse to God and the world if she deprived her subjects of the fair posterity she had it in her power to provide for them."

Soon after the opening of the Royal Exchange, Elizabeth created Sir William Cecil Lord of Burleigh (indifferently spelt Burghley), and made him Lord High Treasurer. Her uncle, Lord William Howard, exchanged the office of Lord Chamberlain for that of Lord Privy Seal ; the Earl of Sussex succeeded him as Chamberlain ; Sir Thomas Smith was made Principal Secretary of State, and Christopher Hatton, Esq., Captain of Her Majesty's Guard. The latter gentleman, who has been described by Naunton as a mere vegetable of the Court, that sprang up at night and sank again at his noon, was soon after preferred to the office of Vice-Chamberlain, sworn of the privy council, and, lastly, made Lord Chancellor. He was indebted for his good fortune to his fine person, insinuating manners, and graceful dancing. He was bred to the law, and entered the Court, as his great enemy, Sir John Perrot, used to say, "by the galliard," for he first appeared there among the gentlemen of the Inns of Court in a mask, at which time her majesty was so charmed with his beauty and activity, that she took him into her band of pensioners, who were considered the tallest and handsomest men in England.

The extraordinary marks of favour lavished by the queen on her new favourite excited the jealousy of the whole Court, and most especially that of Leicester, who, for the purpose of depreciating the accomplishment which had first attracted Elizabeth's notice to the handsome young lawyer, offered to introduce to her attention a dancing master, whose performance of the same dances in which Hatton's caperings had been so much admired was considered much more wonderful, and worthy of the encouragement of her smiles. "Pish!" replied Elizabeth, contemptuously, "I will not see *your* man; it is his trade." Not only her partiality for Hatton, but her good taste, led her to prefer the easy grace of the gentleman to the exhibition of the professor of the art.

Scandal did not spare Elizabeth on the score of Sir Christopher Hatton, but as he was not only the *beau ideal* of a queen's vice-chamberlain, but acquitted himself very well in his high and responsible office of Lord Chancellor, we may fairly conclude that his royal mistress preferred him for his talents to those places, rather than from the improbable weakness which has been attributed to her.

Hatton, though of mild and gentle manners, was rapacious, and coveted a slice of the Bishop of Ely's noble garden, which consisted of twenty acres of richly planted ground on Holborn Hill and Ely Place.

Dr. Cox did not like his see to be despoiled, and resisted this encroachment, though backed by the queen's private orders. This refusal produced the following unique epistle from her maiden majesty:

"Proud Prelate,—You know what you were before I made you what you are now. If you do not immediately comply with my request, I will unfrock you, by God.*" "ELIZABETH."

This letter had the desired effect of inducing the Bishop of Ely to resign a large proportion of the estate of the see—the gate-house of his palace on Holborn Hill, and several acres of land, now Hatton Garden, reserving to himself and his successors free access, through the gate-house, of walking in the garden,

* See Note C, Letter to the Bishop of Ely.

and leave to gather twenty bushels of roses yearly therein. Twenty bushels of roses gathered on Holborn Hill !—what a change of time, place, and produce since. How perplexed would the denizens of Ely Place and Hatton Garden be, if the present Bishop of Ely were to demand his twenty bushels of roses, and permission to gather them in Hatton Garden ? It was this Bishop of Ely who remonstrated with Elizabeth for retaining the crucifix and lighted tapers in her chapel ; for which she never forgave him. Soon after, her fool, set on by one of her courtiers, put out the wax-lights ; but though she suffered them to be abolished in general, she ever retained them on her own domestic altar.

Fénelon informs Catherine de Medicis that there were four lords of Queen Elizabeth's Court and Cabinet who influenced the decisions of all the others, and even those of their royal mistress. He does not name this junta, but they appear to have consisted of Leicester, Cecil, Walsingham, and the Lord Keeper Bacon. It was his decided opinion that it was not the intention of those who ruled the councils of the queen, and overawed the ancient aristocracy of her realm, to permit her to marry. Leicester, from whom he had much of his information, whether true or false, but most probably a mixture of both, informed him, "that such of the lords of the council as were in the interest of Spain were greatly opposed to the match between her majesty and monsieur ; so also, he said, was Mr. Secretary Cecil (Burleigh), who did not choose that his mistress, after the fashion of the world, should have any husband but himself, for he was more the sovereign than she was." So earnestly, indeed, was Cecil bent on diverting Elizabeth from the French marriage, that he even ventured the daring experiment of tampering with her suspected passion for Leicester, by gravely soliciting her to accept him for her husband, as the person who would give the greatest satisfaction to the whole realm, but she treated the notion with deserved contempt.

Leicester, on his part, assured La Mothe Fénelon that, knowing full well that Burleigh had no good meaning in this, and that he only devised it as a contrivance to hinder the queen

from entering into a matrimonial treaty with the French prince ; he had replied, "that when the time was favourable for him in that matter, Burleigh had opposed and prevented him ; but now that the time was unpropitious for it, he pretended to assist him ; but those who would now attempt such a thing were neither good servants to her majesty nor true friends to him, their only aim being to interrupt the propositions of monsieur, for which he (Leicester) owed them no goodwill, nor would render them thanks, not choosing to become their tool."

The queen, meantime, having apparently set her mind entirely on the French marriage, anticipated no other obstacle to her marriage with the handsome Henry of Anjou than that which proceeded from the jealousy of her own Cabinet, the possibility of a demur arising on his part appearing never to have entered into her imagination. Unfortunately, however, the overtures for this marriage had been made by the scheming politicians of France, and the negotiations pursued by the desire of the ambitious Queen-mother, Catherine de Medicis, up to the present point, without the necessary preliminary of obtaining the assent of the said Henry of Anjou to the disposal of his hand in wedlock to her majesty of England.

When matters were so far advanced that it was absolutely necessary for the nominal suitor to come forward, in *propria persona*, the royal youth, with all the reckless wilfulness of his age, expressed his disapproval of the mature bride elect who had been so warmly wooed in his name, and protested "that he would not marry her, for she was not only an old creature, but had a sore leg." This infirmity, though a new feature in the personal description of Queen Elizabeth, was not altogether the invention of her refractory suitor ; it seems she really had a temporary affliction of the kind, for, in the preceding June, La Mothe Fénelon informed his Court, in his official report, that he could not have an audience, on business, with Elizabeth, for she was ill, and, the truth to say, something was the matter with her leg.

Early in February, 1571, the repugnance of young Anjou assumed a graver and sterner form, and finding that his ill-

mannered railing against the royal bride who had been provided for him was only regarded by his mother as boyish petulance, he appealed to the king, his brother, against the marriage, on such startling grounds, that the wily queen-mother, deeming it useless to proceed further with the negotiation in his name, wrote an agitated letter to Monsieur de la Mothe, informing him of the contumacy of Henry, and imploring him to do his best to prevail on the Queen of England to accept his younger brother, the Duke of Alençon, in his place. After telling the ambassador "that she would not confide the purport of what she is about to write to any other hand than her own," she says, "I assure myself that you will conduct this affair so secretly and dexterously that we shall not incur the danger I apprehend, if the Queen of England, thinking herself disdained or scorned, should avenge herself by making war upon us, either openly or underhand, as she has done before now. To come to the point, my son (Anjou) has let me know, by the king his brother, that he will never marry the Queen of England, even if she be ever so willing to have him—so much has he heard against her honour, and seen in the letters of all the ambassadors who have ever been there (in England), that he considers he should be utterly dishonoured, and lose all the reputation he has acquired. But still, hoping to make him yield to reason, I would wish you to continue to write in the same strain as at present, till I can decide what to do; letting the affair proceed, lest she should bear us ill-will, and feel resentful at being refused. I declare to you that, if she expresses a willing mind, I shall feel extreme concern at the opinion he has taken. I would give half my life-blood out of my body could I alter it, but I cannot render him obedient in this matter."

At the end of February the importunities of Catherine de Medicis had wrung from Anjou a declaration that he was not only willing to wed Queen Elizabeth, but that he earnestly desired it. She wrote indefatigably with her own hand to forward the match, and gave the most earnest advice to Elizabeth to wed Anjou while he was in the mind.

In her official instructions to Walsingham, on the subject of the preliminary negotiations for her marriage, Elizabeth expresses herself sincerely disposed to take a consort for the good of her realm, directing him to say, in her name, "that, considering the king is married, there can be no greater nor worthier offer made by the Crown of France than Monsieur d'Anjou ; and therefore we do thankfully accept it."

Meantime, the Earl of Morton, and others of his party, had arrived in England, to treat on the affairs of Scotland, in the name of the infant King James. Queen Elizabeth, who was still amusing Mary and the Court of France with deceptive negotiations, for the restoration of that unfortunate princess to her liberty and her throne, required the rebel commissioners to declare the grounds on which they had deposed their queen. Instead of gratifying her, as she expected, with the repetition of all their frightful accusations against her hapless kinswoman, they favoured her majesty with a lengthy manifesto, setting forth, "that Scotland had from time immemorial been governed by male monarchs ; and that they had the authority of Calvin to prove that magistrates had power to punish wicked sovereigns, by imprisoning and depriving them of their realms ; that they had shown their queen great favour, in permitting her son to reign ; and that she existed at that time only through the mercy of her people." Elizabeth could not listen with even a show of patience to sentiments so opposed to her notion of passive obedience and the divine right of kings. She told the deputies that "they had not shown, nor could she perceive, any just cause for the manner in which they had troubled their queen ; and advised them to seek other means for composing the discord then raging in Scotland."

When Morton refused to agree to the articles of the treaty with Scotland, which had been proposed by the commissioners of Elizabeth, she told the four commissioners who brought his answer to her, "that she perceived in that answer the arrogance and hardness of a very obstinate heart ; and that she knew that Morton himself had not brought such a one to her country, but that he had acquired it here, from some of the members of her

council, of whom she could well say that they were worthy of being hanged at the gate of the castle, with a copy of their advice about their necks ; and that it was not her will that Morton should stir from London, or his suite from her Court, till some good conclusion had been made in this affair."

On March 23rd, 1571, Queen Elizabeth held a council at Greenwich, at which the affairs of Mary Queen of Scots were debated in her presence, and the articles of the treaty, then on the *tapis*, caused such a fierce contention among these statesmen, that her majesty was compelled to interpose for the restoration of order. This she did in the very tone of old Henry her father, by calling one of the assembly "a fool," and another "a mad-man." The French ambassador had been invited to attend this council, as a matter of courtesy to Mary's royal kindred in France, and entered just at the moment the discussion had reached this interesting climax. His arrival gave a different turn to the scene, for instead of proceeding with the subject, his excellency paid his compliments to the queen, "and told her it was a long time since he had received news from France, and he came express this time to inquire of hers."

Before, however, the interview concluded, La Mothe said "he was instructed to inquire how her majesty meant to proceed with respect to the Queen of Scotland." On which Elizabeth observed "that she had doubted whether he would allow the audience to end without naming the Queen of Scots to her, whom she could wish not to be quite so much in his master's remembrance, and still less in his." After this shrewd hint, she said "that she had used her utmost diligence to have the treaty perfected, and complained that the Cardinal of Lorraine had said and done various things against her which Monsieur de la Mothe took some pains to explain ; and the interview ended pleasantly on both sides.

After an interval of five years, Elizabeth found it necessary to summon a new Parliament to meet at Westminster, for the purpose of granting an enormous property tax, consisting of two-tenths and two-fifteenths, and one subsidy by the laity, and six shillings in the pound by the clergy. The interference of

Elizabeth in the Continental wars, and the pensions she had paid for years, and continued to pay, to the mercenary agitators in France, Scotland, and elsewhere, compelled her to inflict these grievous burdens on her own subjects. The spoils of the nobility and gentry who had taken part in the late risings in the North might have sufficed to pay the expenses of the armament employed to crush the insurrection, but the queen had been harassed by the importunities of a greedy set of self-interested councillors and servants, who expected to be paid for their loyal adherence to her cause out of the forfeitures of their misguided neighbours. At the head of these bold beggars was her cousin Lord Hunsdon, who, to use his own expression, was laudably anxious that her majesty's friends "may pyk a sallett" from the spoils of the house of Percy. He and his sons made a good thing of the late revolt.

Nothing tends more to establish despotism in sovereigns than the unsuccessful efforts of a faction to resist lawful authority. In consequence of the late rebellion, statutes were made for the security of the queen, which stretched the prerogatives of the Crown beyond the limits to which the haughtiest of her predecessors had presumed to carry it; and the penalties against nonconformity assumed a character as inconsistent with the divine spirit of Christianity as the religious persecutions which had disgraced the preceding reign.

In the very face of these arbitrary enactments, George Strickland, Esq., one of the leaders of the Puritan party in the House of Commons, moved a reformation in the Liturgy of the Church of England, and his motion was supported by those members professing the same opinions. The queen was highly offended at the presumption of Strickland in daring to touch on matters over which she, as the head of the Church, claimed supreme jurisdiction. But when this intimation was given to the Commons, Strickland and his party unanimously exclaimed, "that the salvation of their souls was in question, to which all the kingdoms of the earth were nothing in comparison." Elizabeth, in a transport of indignation, summoned the uncompromising northern member before her and her council, and

laid her personal commands upon him not to appear any more in the House of Commons. This arbitrary interference with the proceedings of the representatives of the great body of her subjects excited murmurs both deep and loud in the House, which, for the first time, entered the lists with royalty, on the subject of violated privilege, and in defence of that palladium of English liberty—freedom of debate. They maintained withal the constitutional truth, that it was neither in the power of the sovereign to make laws singly, nor to violate those that were already established. Elizabeth had the wisdom to relinquish the struggle, and Strickland triumphantly resumed his place in the House, where he was received with shouts of congratulation.

If we may trust the reports of La Mothe Fénelon, Elizabeth was heard to say “that she was tired of Parliaments. None of her predecessors,” she observed, “had held more than three during their whole lives, while she already had had four, and she had been so much tormented in the last about marrying, that she had resolved on two things—the first was, never to hold another Parliament ; the other, never to marry ; and she meant to die in this resolution.” But, as concerned holding the Parliament, it was easier to make that resolution than to abide by it.

One of the statutes of this Parliament rendered it penal even to speak of any other successor to the crown of England than the issue of the reigning queen. Elizabeth’s fastidious delicacy in refusing to have the word lawful annexed, as if it were possible that any other than legitimate children *could* be born of her, gave rise not only to unnecessary discussions on the subject, but some defamatory reports as to her motives for objecting to the customary word. “I remember,” says Camden, “being then a young man, hearing it said openly by people, that this was done by the contrivance of Leicester, with a design to impose, hereafter, some base son of his own upon the nation, as the queen’s offspring.” In the preceding August, a Norfolk gentleman, of the name of Marsham, had actually been tried for saying, “that my Lord of Leicester had two children by the queen,” and was condemned to lose both his ears, or else to pay a hundred pounds ; both punishments combined would

have been a trifling mulct for the propagation of so injurious a scandal of a female sovereign.

Early in April, 1571, Signor Guido Cavalcanti arrived in England, bearing a joint letter from Charles IX. and Catherine de Medicis, addressed to Queen Elizabeth, in which a formal tender of the Duke of Anjou's hand was made to her. Cavalcanti was stopped at Dover by order of the queen, and conducted, under a guard, to the house of Lord Burleigh, in London, where she had a secret interview with him, on the subject of his mission, before he was permitted to see the French ambassador, to whom the office of delivering the royal letter to her majesty was assigned by his own Court. The next day, April 12th, La Mothe Fénelon obtained an audience of her majesty, who received him in a retired part of her gallery, and, after a few observations had been exchanged on other subjects, he made the proposal in due form, and delivered to her the letter from the King and Queen-mother of France. She received it, according to Fénelon, with evident satisfaction, and replied modestly, but expressed herself so desirous of the accomplishment of the marriage, that he was fully convinced of her sincerity. She referred him to Leicester and Burleigh, as the chosen councillors by whom the conditions of the marriage were to be arranged on her part.

On April 13th articles were presented by the French ambassador and Cavalcanti, as preliminaries, among which it was proposed that the marriage might be solemnised without the ceremonies prescribed by the Catholic ritual ; that monsieur and his domestics should have free exercise of their religion ; that, immediately the marriage was concluded, monsieur should govern jointly with the queen ; and that, the day after the consummation of the marriage, he should be crowned as the husband of the queen, and received by her subjects as king, and sixty thousand livres a year should be granted for his maintenance. It was replied, on the part of Elizabeth, "that she could not concede the exercise of his religion to the duke, but that she would promise that neither he nor his servants should be compelled to use those of her Church. The title of king," of which

she notices "there was precedent in the case of her sister's husband, King Philip," she was willing to allow. With regard to the pension, she objected, but did not refuse it, observing "that King Philip had no manner of thing allowed him, but sustained all his own charge, and gave also to noblemen, gentlemen, and yeomen of our nation good entertainment." *

She then made some inquiries as to the dominions of the prince, and in what manner they were to be inherited, whether by daughters as well as sons. She notices that the ambassador had earnestly required "that if the duke should survive her, and have a child living that should be heir to the crown, he might retain the regal title, with this modification, to be called 'rex pater;' and if no child should be surviving, then to be called 'rex dotarius' (king-dowager)." Of this very original clause, her majesty contents herself with observing "that she considers it rather matter of form than substance, and meeter to be thought of when greater matters are accorded than in the present stage of the business."

In a conference between Walsingham and Monsieur de Foix, on the subject of the disputed articles, when Walsingham told de Foix that the difference on religion appeared the principal obstacle, the other replied "that it was necessary, both for the prince's happiness and honour, that he should have some religion, and that he believed him to be well disposed in that way, yet not so assuredly grounded but that some change might be effected in time, and with the queen's good persuasions; whereof," continued the Catholic negotiator, "we have seen good experience of woman's virtue in that way. Constantine was converted by his mother Helena, the King of Navarre by the queen his wife, and therefore can I not doubt but, this match proceeding, monsieur will be turned by his wife." To this it was replied, on Elizabeth's part, "that although it would be a glory to her to imitate the Empress Helena in so great a thing, yet it by no means followed that such would be the case with regard to monsieur, for there were to the full as many wives converted by their husbands as husbands by their wives."

* Instructions to Walsingham, in the Complete Ambassador, 84.

As to the articles submitted to her on the part of their majesties and monsieur, she found the greatest difficulty in those which related to religion, and she wished some of the ceremonials, required by the prince, in the marriage service to be omitted. The reply to this was "that her majesty's marriage with monsieur ought to be dignified with all the solemnities suited to their relative positions, and that the King and Queen of France were sure she would not treat the prince so unkindly as to wish to deprive him of the exercise of his religion ; neither could she esteem him, if, for the sake of worldly advantages, he were to dispense with it." To this Elizabeth very obligingly responded, "that she had herself been sacred and crowned according to the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, and by Catholic bishops, without, however, assisting at the mass, and that she would be sorry if she thought monsieur was willing to give up his religion, for if he had the heart to forsake God, he might also forsake her." However, she referred all to the Lords Leicester and Burleigh, whom she appears to have constituted lord-keepers of her conscience in this delicate affair.

She spoke of the praises she had heard of the prince, with a fear, put in parenthetically, that he had not received such advantageous reports of her, and fell to repeating the commendations she had heard of his sense, prudence, and good grace, of his valour and magnanimity, and the beauty and elegance of his person, not forgetting to speak of his hand, which she had been told was one of the most uncommonly beautiful that had ever been seen in France ; "and then," says the ambassador, "concluded, with a smile, by telling me 'that she would have me told one day by my said lord, if things came to a good winding up, that I ought rather to have maintained that a match with her would be more honourable for him than with the Queen of Scots.'"

La Mothe Fénelon afterwards applied himself to Leicester and Burleigh, and inquired of them how the nobles of the realm stood affected to the match. Leicester replied "that he had sounded the Duke of Norfolk on that point, for he was the leader of the ancient nobility, and he had professed himself entirely devoted to the wishes of the King of France and his

brother of Anjou." Some communication had already taken place between Norfolk and La Mothe Fénelon on the subject, and the latter had promised that in case the duke made no objection to the matrimonial treaty between the French Prince and Elizabeth, his own marriage with the Queen of Scots would be facilitated, through the friendship of the Court of France. Meantime, one of La Mothe's spies informed him "that the opinion of the people was, that the queen neither could, would, nor ought to espouse monsieur, and that her intention was merely to lull the French court on the affairs of Scotland, and also to induce the King of Spain to offer better conditions to her, and for the satisfaction of some of her subjects; but even if all the articles of the contract could be agreed upon, the marriage would never take effect, and that leagues were already formed to strengthen the malcontents from the dangers that might befall from this marriage."

It was shortly after this that Walsingham wrote to Elizabeth "that the Court of France projected a marriage between the Duke of Anjou and Mary Queen of Scots; and matters were so far advanced that the Pope had been applied to, and had promised to grant a dispensation; and that it was determined, if the treaty for restoring her to her liberty and royal authority did not succeed, that an expedition should be immediately prepared for taking her by force of arms from England." Elizabeth was transported with rage and jealousy at the idea that the prince whose addresses she had condescended to encourage actually preferred to her and her royal dowry the deposed, calumniated princess whose existence hung on her *fiat*. This preference, though unsought by her beautiful rival, who, wrapped up in the excitement of her romantic passion for Norfolk, regarded the addresses of all other suitors with coldness and impatience, was probably the cause of the vindictive cruelty with which the last fifteen years of the hapless Mary's imprisonment was aggravated, and the many petty mortifications which Elizabeth meanly inflicted upon her. Mary's treatment at this period was so harsh, that Charles interposed in behalf of his hapless sister-in-law, by

his ambassador, who, ceasing to speak of the Duke of Anjou, warned Elizabeth "that unless she took means for the restoration of the Queen of Scotland to her rightful dignity, and in the meantime treated her in a kind and honourable manner, he should send forces openly to her assistance."

Elizabeth stifled her anger at this menace, so far as to commence her reply with deceitful softness, "that she was grieved that he should always put her friendship at less account than that of the Queen of Scots;" and then began angrily to enumerate a great number of offences which she had received from that lady, before she entered into her realm; and many and more heinous ones since, by her intrigues with Rome, France, and Flanders, and lately with the Duchess of Feria, in Spain,—of all of which she had such clear proofs in her possession, that she could not but regard her as her greatest enemy."

About this time the Emperor Maximilian offered his eldest son, Prince Rodolph, as a husband for Elizabeth, a youth about six months younger than the Duke of Anjou; and Elizabeth gave an encouraging reply to the overture. On this, the ambitious Queen-mother of France, dreading the loss of so grand a match for her son Anjou, conjured him to waive all foolish scruples, and win the prize from this powerful rival. She even entreated Walsingham to try the effect of his rhetoric on her perverse son, in a private conversation, for the purpose of prevailing on him to exchange the mass for the Crown matrimonial of England.

The prince replied as evasively as Elizabeth herself could have done under such temptation, by saying "that he rather desired to become the means of redressing inconveniences, than causing any, which he trusted would not happen." Not to be outdone by Elizabeth's boasts of the numerous matrimonial offers she had received, he added, "that though he was young, yet for the last five years there had been many overtures of marriage made unto him, but that he found in himself no inclination to yield to any, till the present; but," said he, "I must needs confess, that through the great commendations that are made of the queen, your mistress, for her rare gifts

as well of mind as of body, being, as even her very enemies say, the rarest creature that has been seen in Europe these five hundred years, my affections grounded upon so good respect, make me yield to be wholly hers ; and if I thought any inconvenience could ensue to her disquiet through me, I would rather wish myself never to have been." He then requested, as it touched his soul and conscience, that some private place might be accorded for the exercise of his own religion in secret. Walsingham replied, by recommending him to dispose himself to a devout attendance on the Church service. On which he rejoined, "that he knew not how God hereafter would dispose his heart, therefore for the present he requested her majesty to weigh in her own mind, what it was to do anything with scruple or remorse of conscience, and so requested Walsingham to present his most affectionate and humble commendations to her, and to assure her that she only had authority to command him." A very dutiful declaration, if it had been sincere.

Elizabeth had, about the same time, the offer of the young hero and hope of the Protestant cause in France, Henry of Navarre ; but she gave little encouragement to his suit. Her pride was more flattered by the addresses of the princes of the royal house of Valois or Austria. She coquetted with all in turn, both amorously and politically.

Whenever Elizabeth perceived that the negotiation flagged, she said "that her inclination for matrimony had decreased, and she had in fact never suffered such great constraint since her imprisonment in the Tower during her sister's reign, as she had done in making up her mind to marry." She also caused reports to be circulated, that she was going to send Sir Henry Sidney and Sir James Croft into Spain, on a secret mission, touching the rival candidate for her hand, Prince Rodolph. Then the indefatigable Monsieur de la Mothe, alarmed at the possibility of such an alliance, redoubled his flatteries and persuasions in behalf of his recreant client, Anjou, whom neither gallantry, ambition, nor maternal authority could induce to come to England and plead his own cause.

Two portraits from the skilful hand of Janet were afterwards sent—one to show the face, the other the figure of the prince; but the original, though Elizabeth had so frequently intimated how agreeable a visit from him would be, remained obstinately on the other side the water, whence reports were perpetually transmitted by Walsingham, sometimes of his projected marriage with the Queen of Scots, and at others with her venerable rival, the Princess of Portugal.

The detection of the share the French ambassador had taken in the Norfolk plot had the effect of suspending the negotiations for the alliance between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou, and though Burleigh, in one of his oracular letters to Walsingham, at this crisis, writes, "Truly, the more matters are discovered, the more necessary it is seen that her majesty should marry," all attempts to agitate the matter proved abortive. The reluctance of the proposed bridegroom was, in fact, insurmountable, though the farce was carried on a few weeks longer.

CHAPTER VII

Elizabeth discovers Norfolk's implication in Ridolfi's plot—Scene with the French ambassador—Her anger—Her observation touching her wedding—Anjou breaks his faith with her—His younger brother offered to her in his place—Elizabeth's vexation—Her reluctance to Norfolk's execution—Signs his death-warrant—Revokes it—Dangerous illness of Elizabeth—Her marriage treaty with Alençon—Execution of Norfolk—Parliament urges her to execute the Queen of Scots—Elizabeth's noble reply—Signs a treaty with France—Dissimulation—Flattered by La Mothe Fénelon—Her reception of the French ambassador after the massacre of St. Bartholomew—Her project for betraying the Queen of Scots—Her parsimony—She continues secretly her marriage treaty with Alençon—Accepts the office of sponsor to Charles IX.'s infant—Scene in the privy council—Love letters from Alençon to Elizabeth—He asks permission to visit her—She demurs.

WHILE Elizabeth was deluding herself into something like an imaginary passion for the youthful heir-presumptive of France her kinsman, the Duke of Norfolk, had resumed his interdicted

correspondence with the captive Queen of Scots, and the luckless lovers had suffered themselves to be entangled by the intriguing Florentine banker, Ridolfi, in the meshes of a political plot, of the full tendency of which they appear not to have been aware. Its ostensible object was the liberation of Mary, her marriage with Norfolk, and her restoration to her rightful throne. As this could not be effected without foreign aid, Mary and Norfolk empowered Ridolfi to apply to the Duke of Alva.

Alva by no means approved of his client, whom he regarded as a chattering visionary, half madman, half knave, but as it was the policy of his sovereign to cause all the annoyance in his power to the Queen of England, he promised to assist the confederates with ten thousand men in the following spring. Letters to that effect were found on the person of Baily, the Queen of Scots' courier from France, and a watchful eye was kept on all parties. Meantime, Fénelon, by Mary's desire, furnished two thousand crowns in gold for the relief of her faithful friends in Scotland. These the Duke of Norfolk undertook to forward, and his servant, Higford, gave the bag to a person of the name of Brown, telling him it was silver for the duke's private use, and bidding him deliver it to Banister, his lord's steward. Brown, judging by the weight of the bag that it contained gold, carried it to the council. It was opened, and letters in cipher discovered, which betrayed the whole business. Norfolk was arrested, and the letters from the Queen of Scots, which Higford had been ordered to burn, but had treacherously preserved, were found under the mats of his chamber door, and the key of the cipher in which they were written under the tiles of the house.

There is something peculiarly revolting in the fact that Elizabeth should have been so callous to all the tender sympathies of the female character, as to enjoin the application of torture to extort a confession, against their unfortunate lord, from Barker and Banister, two of the Duke of Norfolk's servants. She says :—

“ If they shall not seem to you to confess plainly their knowledge, then we warrant you to cause them both, or either of them, to be

brought to the rack ; and first to move them with fear thereof, to deal plainly in their answers ; and if that shall not move them, then you shall cause them to be put to the rack, *and to find the taste thereof*, until they shall deal more plainly, or until you shall think meet."

Two days subsequent to the date of this warrant, Sir Thomas Smith writes thus to Lord Burleigh respecting Barker's, Banister's, and the other examinations :—

" I suppose we have gotten so much as at this time is likely to be had, yet to-morrow do we intend to bring a couple of them to the rack, not in any hope to get anything worthy that pain and fear, but because it is so earnestly commanded to us."

Melancholy comment on the royal order !

When the confessions of Higford, and others of his servants, were read to the unfortunate nobleman, he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his heart, " I am betrayed and undone by mine own people, for not knowing how to distrust, which is the only sinew of wisdom ! "

Ridolfi deposed before the council, " that the Catholics were resolved to seize the queen's person, or to assassinate her, during one of her progresses in the country, and that the Marquis Vitelli had offered to strike the blow." The Pope, the King of Spain, and the Bishop of Ross were all stated to be cognisant of these intentions, but the Duke of Norfolk passionately denied having the slightest evil intention against his royal mistress ; he acknowledged that he had been undutiful in disobeying her commands, but that he would have died a thousand deaths rather than have suffered her to be harmed.

The queen was greatly irritated, especially against the Bishop of Ross, whom she had at one time determined to put to death. While her indignation was at its height, the French ambassador came to intercede for the bishop, and presented a letter in his behalf from Charles IX., which he prayed her majesty to take in good part. The queen read the letter, and replied angrily, " that she could not take it in good part that the King of France should have written to her in that fashion, for the bishop had been plotting against her, to introduce foreigners as invaders of her realm, who were to be joined, she found, by some of her own subjects, and that there was a conspiracy to declare her

illegitimate, and to place the Queen of Scots on her throne ; for which, as he had violated the character of an ambassador, she had imprisoned him." She said, " she wished to know to whom the Bishop of Ross had written two letters, marked 40 and 30, since the Spanish ambassador and the Queen of Scots had affirmed it was not to them ; " and significantly observed, " that the King of France, who had been implicated in the confederacy against her, wished, she supposed, to exemplify the truth of this saying of Machiaveili—

" 'The friendship of princes does not go beyond their convenience.' "

Charles might have retorted that all the domestic troubles by which his realm was convulsed had been, in like manner, fomented by Elizabeth. He had been especially incensed at the protection afforded by her to the Count Montgomeri, by whose erring lance his royal father had been slain at the bridal tournament twelve years before, and who had since distinguished himself as one of the Huguenot leaders. After the defeat of his party at Moncortour, Montgomeri had taken refuge in England. Charles demanded, by his ambassador, that he should be given up. " Tell your master," said Elizabeth, " that I shall answer him in this case, as his father once did my sister, when some of her traitors having fled to France, she demanded that justice might be done on them, to which he replied, ' I see no reason why I should be the Queen of England's hangman ; ' and such is my answer touching Montgomeri."

As neither Charles nor Elizabeth were prepared for open hostility, they contented themselves with doing each other all the ill turns they could, under the name of friendship, exchanging meanwhile all the compliments and affectionate professions that the deceitful tempers of either could devise. On November 11th the French ambassador gave a banquet at his own house to Leicester, Burleigh, the admiral, and the other members of Elizabeth's Cabinet ; on which occasion Leicester enlarged on the affection borne by his royal mistress to the King of France, and assured La Mothe " that nothing could disunite them, unless it were interference with her majesty in the affairs of

Scotland ; and at the same time openly avowed that it was not her intention ever to liberate the Scottish Queen."

The Court of Elizabeth was enlivened by four weddings, December 22nd ; that of the sister of the Earl of Huntingdon with the son of the Earl of Worcester, the eldest daughter of the Lord Chamberlain with Lord Dudley, the daughter of Burleigh with the Earl of Oxford, and the Lord Paget with a rich young widow. Elizabeth honoured the nuptials of the daughter of her premier with the representative of the ancient line of de Vere, with her presence, and, becoming a little merry at the wedding feast, she was pleased to observe to the French ambassador "that so many marriages at one time seemed to her a presage that her own would soon take place."

Monsieur de la Mothe, though well aware of the state of the handsome and reckless Henry of Anjou's feelings towards his royal *fiancée*, made a complimentary reply to this intimation and took care to charge the blame of the tardy progress of the treaty on her majesty's confidential advisers.

It was a singular coincidence that the month of January, 1572, was fraught with the condemnation of Mary Stuart's affianced lover, the Duke of Norfolk, and the rupture of the matrimonial treaty between the Duke of Anjou and Queen Elizabeth. Matters had, indeed, come to such a pass, that Elizabeth perceived that if she would avoid the mortification of being refused by that prince, she must refuse him, on the grounds of religious scruples. She expressed her regrets "at the necessity that compelled her to decline the alliance, and hoped that neither the King of France nor monsieur would consider her fickle ; but, till the last communication she received from them, she had flattered herself that the disputed points might have been arranged."

The plenipotentiaries of France, who had long been aware of the impossibility of inducing their wilful prince to fulfil the engagements which had been promised and vowed in his name, felt themselves relieved from an embarrassing dilemma by the declaration of Elizabeth ; and the very same day proposed, as a candidate for her majesty's hand, the Duke of Alençon, the

younger brother of Henry of Anjou, who was disposed to be more complying on the subject of religion than the said Henry. The first hint touching this absurd alliance was given to Burleigh and Leicester, and not, on the whole, unfavourably received, though one of them exclaimed, in his first surprise, that "the royal pair would rather remind people of a mother and son, than of a husband and wife." Particular inquiries were then made as to the prince's age, and especially what was his precise height. The artful Frenchman had no distinct remembrance on these points.

Burleigh, who was sick of an intermittent fever and cold, caught at the marriage of his daughter with the young Earl of Oxford, wrote to Walsingham, January 23rd, 1571-2, in allusion to this new suitor of the royal house of France. "In the matter of the third person, newly offered, his age, and other qualities unknown, maketh one doubtful how to use speech thereof. The ambassador hath dealt, as he saith, secretly with me ; and I have showed no argument from one hand or the other, but fear occupieth me more in this cause of her marriage, whom God suffered to lose so much time, than for my next fit."

When the premier broke the matter to Elizabeth, and told her "that the treaty of alliance proposed with the Duke of Alençon would be attended with the same political advantages as that lately negotiated for Anjou," her majesty replied, quickly, "that, however suitable it might be in other respects, there was too great a disproportion in age, as well as stature, between them ;" and asked, "how tall the Duke of Alençon was ?"

"About your majesty's own height," was the reply. Elizabeth was not to be put off with generalities on such important points—she insisted on date and measurement being produced. Burleigh applied to the ambassador for these, and both were promised.

Notwithstanding the semblance of indifference assumed by Elizabeth on the rupture of the matrimonial treaty with Henry of Anjou, it was a bitter mortification to her in reality ; for Burleigh writes, in confidence to Walsingham, "This matter of monsieur is here grievously (in secret) taken, and surely it was not *here* well used, in drawing it out at length, which was

politically done ; so hath it not *there* been friendly ordered, and yet I do not so show mine opinion of her majesty's stomaching that part, where the amity is so needful." Thus it appears that the suavity with which the ridiculous proposal of the youngest brother of France was received, proceeded at first, not from the coquetry of Elizabeth, but the diplomacy of Burleigh, who was determined not to allow his sovereign to take an affront with the Court of France. Her majesty in consequence smothered her resentment, and revenged herself by playing on the maternal ambition of the queen-mother, and tantalised her for years with delusive hopes that she might be induced to share her crown with the ugly untoward imp, Alençon.

Elizabeth held the axe suspended over her unfortunate kinsman, the Duke of Norfolk, for many weeks, during which time earnest supplication was made for his life, by his mother, sister, and the French ambassador. He endeavoured himself to mollify her by his submissive deportment, though he behaved like a faithful and stainless knight with regard to his royal love, the captive Queen of Scots. Early in February, Elizabeth issued her warrant and order for his execution on the following morning ; and at eleven at night her mind misgave her, and she sent to revoke it.

Burleigh, who, some months before, had offered to save the life of this great peer if he would resign his pretensions to the hand of the Queen of Scots, and marry his sister, had, on his declining, though with all possible courtesy, an alliance so unsuitable in point of birth, conceived the most vindictive hatred for him, and sorely grudged at these indications of the royal disposition to mercy. In one of his letters to Walsingham, dated February 11th, he says :—

"I cannot write to you what is the inward stay of the Duke of Norfolk's death, only I find her majesty diversely disposed. Sometimes, when she speaketh of her danger, she concludeth that justice should be done ; another time, when she speaketh of his nearness of blood, (meaning his close degree of relationship to herself,) of his superiority in honour, she stayeth. On Saturday, she signed a warrant for the writs to the sheriffs of London

for his execution on Monday ; and so all preparations were made, with the expectation of all London, and concourse of many thousands yesterday in the morning, but their coming was answered with another ordinary execution of Mather and Burney, for conspiring the queen's majesty's death, and of one Ralph, for counterfeiting her majesty's hand twice, to get concealed lands. And the cause of this disappointment was this :— suddenly on Sunday, late in the night, the queen's majesty sent for me, and entered into a great misliking that the duke should die the next day, and said she was and should be disquieted, and “that she would have a new warrant made that night to the sheriffs to forbear until they should hear further, and so they did. God's will be fulfilled, and aid her majesty to do herself good.”

Norfolk was nearly allied in blood to the queen, and whether from that cause, or from the consciousness of his accomplishments and great popularity, she appears to have entertained many misgivings before she could resolve to carry the sentence against him into effect. Through the incessant importunity of Burleigh and Leicester, she again signed an order for his execution on the 27th, and revoked it the next morning, two hours before day. Two other warrants were afterwards signed and revoked in the same manner.

The last letter of revocation, the original of which is written entirely in the queen's own hand, is extremely curious, and worthy of the reader's attention. It is addressed to Lord Burleigh, and is as follows :—

“ My Lord, methinks that I am more beholden to the hinder part of my head than will dare trust the forward side of the same, and therefore sent the lieutenant and the S., as you know best, the order to defer this execution till they hear further. And that this may be done, I doubt nothing, without curiosity of my further warrant, for that this rash determination upon a very unfit day, was countermanded by your considerate admonition. The causes that move me to this are not now to be expressed, lest an irrevocable deed be in meanwhile committed. If they will need a warrant, let this suffice, all written with my own hand. Your most loving sovereigne,

“ ELIZABETH R.”

This letter is endorsed in Lord Burleigh's hand :—

"xi. Apl. 1572.

"The Q. Majy. with
her own hand, for
staying of the execution
of the D. N.
R. at 2 in the morning."

Elizabeth appears to have been much exasperated, at this painful crisis, by a letter addressed by the Queen of Scots to the Duke of Alva, which was unfortunately intercepted. When she gave an audience to Monsieur du Croc, who had just arrived on a mission from France, and wished to obtain permission to see Mary, and also to convey her to France, she told him "she would not grant either request, and took a paper out of her pocket," says La Mothe Fénelon, "which she showed us was a letter in cipher, and we recognised that it was really signed by the Queen of Scotland's hand. She then read to us a portion of the decipherment, which was addressed to the Duke of Alva, exhorting him to send ships to the coast of Scotland, to carry off the prince her son, whom she had committed to the King of Spain. Unfortunately, Mary adverted to the state of affairs in England in this letter, and said "that she had a strong party there, and of the lords who favoured her cause, of whom, although some were prisoners, the Queen of England would not dare to touch their lives." She concluded by expressing a hope "that the whole island would, by these means, in time be restored to the Catholic Church."

La Mothe goes on to say that Elizabeth's comments on this decipherment were very bitter, and she enlarged angrily on all the plots which she said "the Queen of Scots had devised to deprive her of her life and royal estate."

It was this letter which, probably, decided the fate of Norfolk, for Elizabeth was not of a temper to brook the opinion that she dared not touch the life of the mightiest in her realm, who had offended her, although the noble blood, that she was preparing to shed on a scaffold, was the same that flowed in her own veins, the duke and herself being the descendants of the same great-grandfather—the victorious Earl of Surrey, afterwards Duke of Norfolk.

It is very probable that the sudden and dangerous attack of illness with which Elizabeth was seized, about March 20th, was caused by the mental conflict she certainly suffered at this anxious period. This illness appears to have been severe inflammation of the chest and stomach, attended with agonising pain; and, according to the temper of the times, it was at first attributed to poison, though her majesty's physicians declared "that it was occasioned by her contempt for physic, and utter neglect of such potions as they considered necessary to keep her in health." But, from whatever cause it originated, her illness was most alarming to her Cabinet, and with good cause, considering how deeply one and all stood committed with the captive heiress of the realm. The whole Court awaited the event in breathless suspense—the two whom it most concerned, Leicester and Burleigh, watched three whole nights by her bedside, and the French ambassador detained his courier, who was ready to start with his despatches, till it was decided whether her majesty would live or die. The shadow of death passed from over her, after five days of intense pain, and, as soon as she was convalescent, she again issued her mandate for the execution of the Duke of Norfolk; and, for the fourth time, revoked her order. This was April 17th.

In consequence of Elizabeth's reluctance to bring the Duke of Norfolk to the block, a party was raised by the secret instigation of Burleigh, and his other equally deadly foe, Leicester, by whom her majesty was urged both privately and publicly, to cause the sentence of death to be executed on the unfortunate duke. At length, an address from Parliament, assuring her that there could be no security for herself and realm till this were done, furnished her with a legitimate excuse for bringing him to the block, June 2nd, 1572.

The death of Norfolk was intended by Elizabeth's council as a prelude to that of a more illustrious victim. The queen was told "that she must lay the axe to the root of the evil, for that she would neither have rest or security while the Scottish queen was in existence." Elizabeth, with a burst of generous feeling, recoiled from the suggestion. "Can I put

to death," she exclaimed, "the bird that, to escape the pursuit of the hawk, has fled to my feet for protection? Honour and conscience forbid!"

The same Parliament which had urged the execution of the Duke of Norfolk passed a Bill for inflicting the punishment of death on the Queen of Scots, for her share in the recent plots, but Elizabeth refused her assent both to that and another Bill, which would have made it a capital offence for any one to assert the rights of that princess to the regal succession.

The tragedy of Norfolk's execution was followed by a series of brilliant *fêtes*, which were ordained in honour of the arrival of the Duke de Montmorenci and Monsieur de Foix, who came to conclude, in the name of the King of France, the solemn treaty of perpetual peace and alliance between that prince and Queen Elizabeth, as well as to make an official offer to her of the hand of the boy Alençon.

On June 14th the noble envoys presented their credentials to her majesty, together with private letters from the King of France, the queen-mother, and the two princes, her late suitor, and her present; all which she received graciously, but only read that from the king in their presence. The next day being Sunday, they, with the French ambassador, Monsieur de la Mothe, were introduced by Lord Burleigh into the Chapel Royal, after the prayers were ended, for the purpose of receiving a solemn ratification of the treaty from the queen.

A profusion of compliments having been exchanged, her majesty expressed her happiness at entering into a treaty of perpetual alliance with the King of France; and called "God to witness for her punishment, if in her heart He saw not a true intention of bringing forth the fruits of this concord by suitable deeds; for words," she said, "were no better than leaves." She made also a deceitful profession of her impartial dealing with regard to Scotland, in a loud voice. She then demanded the parchment digest of the treaty with the royal seal and signature of the King of France, which was forthwith presented to her with all due ceremony, by the plenipotentiaries of his most Christian majesty. Then she approached the altar,

and, laying her hand on the gospels, which were held by one of her bishops, swore solemnly "to observe all the articles contained in the treaty." She signed it on a golden desk, which was supported by four earls, in the presence of a great many French nobles, and the principal lords and ladies of her Court.

La Mothe Fénelon informs the Queen-mother of France, in his letter of June 22nd, "that he had urged Burleigh and Leicester to entreat their royal mistress to give an early answer on the subject of the marriage, and grant a conference to himself and Montmorenci. "For this cause," pursues he, "she sent for us all three on the morrow, to come to her after dinner, in private, without ceremony. We were brought by water into her garden, and found her in a gallery, where she received us all very graciously."

Elizabeth, while she avoided saying anything that might in the slightest degree commit herself, accused the equally cautious procurators of confining themselves to generalities, and said, "she desired to enter into particularities, especially on the important subject of religion." They assured her that everything would be arranged to her satisfaction. It is impossible not to observe the malign pleasure with which Elizabeth recounts the personal defects of the unlucky boy, whom the royal *intriguante*, Catherine de Medicis, had the folly to propose as a suitable consort for her. She demands of the ambassador, "what compensation is to be made to her, in the marriage articles, for the injury to his face from the small-pox?" and discusses his royal highness from top to toe, with no more ceremony than is commonly used by persons who are bargaining for the purchase of a lap-dog, a monkey, or any other animal of small account. But for the strong reasons of political expediency, which rendered it necessary for the haughty Elizabeth to keep fair with France, there can be no doubt but she would have poured the overflowing measure of her ill-concealed scorn on both mother and son; as it was, she served her own purposes by humouring this most absurd of projects, and permitted the wily Catherine, and her agreeable agent, Monsieur de la Mothe

Fénelon, to fancy that they were beguiling her, while she was in reality fooling them.

It was, however, no mistake for them to suppose that their flattery had some effect on the mind of Elizabeth, for she enjoyed it so much that it was evident she prolonged the negotiations for the purpose of having the dose more frequently repeated; but though it was not difficult for the insinuating diplomatist to persuade the vainest of princesses that she was the most beautiful woman in the world, and that the laws of nature were so far reversed in her favour that time had improved her charms instead of injuring them, it was another matter to induce her to bestow all these perfections, in addition to her more important endowments of grandeur and regal power, on a suitor of Alençon's description. Elizabeth certainly treated the idea with mockery, at the very time that she was feasting and bestowing honours, presents, and counter-flattery on the procurators of the marriage. The *fêtes* and entertainments with which she graced Montmorenci and de Foix lasted for a whole fortnight. The queen gratified them with costly and valuable presents of plate and money at their departure. Burleigh informs Walsingham "that the ambassadors did all they could in the matter of the Duc d'Alençon, but got from her majesty neither yea nor nay, but the delay of a month, in which she was to make up her mind." He charges Walsingham, meantime, to learn all he can of the duke, his real age and stature, and conditions, his inclination to religion, and that of his followers; of all which her majesty desired to be speedily advertised, that she might resolve before the month; "and surely," observes the premier, "I cannot see any lack in this, but in opinion for his age; which defect, if it might be supplied with some other recompense, were not worthy to be thought of. I wish we might have Calais for their issue, and he to be governor thereof during his life, so as we might have security for our staple there."

The French ambassador writes volumes to Charles IX. and the Queen-mother, relating his private conferences with Elizabeth and the proceedings of her council on the subject of this alliance, assuring them, "that the queen is better disposed

towards it than she has yet been." He expresses his satisfaction, in particular, for the good offices which he considers have been rendered by the Earl of Leicester in the negotiation, and repeats his opinion that the latter should be rewarded with a wealthy French heiress of the highest rank, in return for his services. The clear-headed Burleigh condensed the actual substance of all the frothy compliments, affectations, and mystifications used by his royal mistress in her discussions with the noble French diplomats, into the following brief entry, which is inscribed by his own hand in his private diary :—

"August 22nd.—Answer given to La Mothe, at Kenilworth, when he came to move marriage for Francis, Duke of Alençon, younger brother to the French king : that there were two difficulties, one for difference of religion, the other for their ages ; but yet that the articles moved in his brother, the Duke of Anjou's, case, might serve for him."

Two days after this oracular sentence was inscribed by Burleigh, the massacre of St. Bartholomew was perpetrated in Paris. The tidings of this direful tragedy were received in England with feelings of generous indignation, which rendered all ranks of the people ready to take up arms, to avenge the murdered victims of the treacherous and profligate Catherine de Medicis, and the abhorrent instruments of her atrocity. The very name of a Frenchman was regarded with horror, and La Mothe Fénelon, and his suite, felt themselves the objects of popular detestation, though innocent of the slightest knowledge of the crime that had been committed in the blood-stained metropolis of France. No one could be more deeply mortified at the transaction than La Mothe himself, who does not scruple to express, in plain terms, to his royal master his grief and annoyance at what had taken place, and the disgraceful light in which it had placed the monarch and people of France in the opinion of the English.

Elizabeth at first declined giving audience to the luckless ambassador, on whom the task devolved of making the most plausible story he could in extenuation of this dreadful business. After taking three days to consider whether she would see

him or not, she at length decided on granting him an interview at Woodstock, where she was when the intelligence reached her. She received him in her privy chamber, in the presence of the lords of the council and the principal ladies of her Court, all of whom were, like herself, clad in the deepest mourning. A solemn silence prevailed on his entrance, and after a brief pause, the queen advanced ten or twelve paces to receive him, with a grave, stern countenance, but with her wonted courtesy; and leading him to a window, apart from the rest, she said something apologetic for having delayed his audience, and demanded of him "if it were possible that the strange news she had heard of the prince whom she so much loved, honoured, and confided in of all the world, could be true."

La Mothe told her "that in truth he had come to lament with her over the sad accident that had just occurred, to the infinite regret of the king, who had been compelled, for the security of his life, and that of the queen, his mother, and his two brothers, to put down the sedition and traitorous plots of those who had confederated against him many high and horrible treasons, and that what he had done was as painful to him as if he had cut off one of his arms to preserve the rest of his body."

Elizabeth inquired, with eager curiosity, into the particulars; and lamented that the king had not proceeded against the admiral, and his adherents, according to the laws which punish treason; observing "that although she had been unable to accept his majesty for a husband, she would always love and revere him as if she were his wife; that she was infinitely jealous of his honour, and believed that it was neither according to his disposition, nor from any premeditation of his own, that these murders had happened; but from some strange accident, which time would elucidate."

The convenient term "accident" was afterwards adopted by Elizabeth herself, on an occasion when, as in the case of the royal culprits of St. Bartholomew, it implied an equivocal denial of a crime too black to be acknowledged or defended by the perpetrator.

The French ambassador, notwithstanding the trepidation

with which he had entered the presence of Elizabeth, and the chill which her first reception had given him, took courage before the audience ended, to present her with a love letter from the Duke of Alençon, and she received it willingly, and read it with apparent satisfaction. She said, however, "that it had been her intention to send the most honourable ambassador that had been seen in France for a long time, to show her respect for the most Christian Queen, on the occasion of the birth of her first child, which was soon expected ; but that, now, she should take care that neither Leicester or Burleigh went, knowing how much their deaths were desired by the persons who were the instigators of what had taken place at Paris."

On leaving the queen, La Mothe had to go over the same slippery ground in explanations to the lords of her council, who were far from taking the matter as easily as their mistress had done. They would not hear of accidents or mistakes, but declared that the recent massacre was, without doubt, the most enormous crime that had been committed since the death of Jesus Christ, and loudly condemned the treachery and cruelty of those by whom it had been planned and executed.

In a letter to the king his master, dated September 29th, La Mothe describes the mortifying situation in which he and all his countrymen were placed in England, and says "that no one will speak to him but the queen, who treats him with her accustomed urbanity."

Not more atrocious, however, was the ruthless fanaticism which prompted the butcher-work by which the day of St. Bartholomew was for ever rendered a watchword of reproach against Catholics, than the murderous spirit of cruelty and injustice which led the professors of the reformed faith to clamour for the blood of the captive Mary Stuart, as a victim to the manes of the slaughtered Protestants. Sandys, Bishop of London, in a letter to Burleigh, enclosed a paper of measures which he deemed expedient for the good of the realm and the security of his royal mistress at that crisis, beginning with this startling article, "Forthwith to cut off the Scottish queen's head." Burleigh endeavoured to prevail on Elizabeth to follow

this sanguinary counsel, telling her "that it was the only means of preventing her own deposition and murder." It is easy at all times to persuade hatred that revenge is an act of justice.

Elizabeth was beset by tempters of no common plausibility; men who had always a Scripture text in readiness to quiet the divine witness of conscience against crime. She had resisted their previous solicitations to take the life of her defenceless captive, and placed her refusal on high and noble grounds; but her resolves, whether in good or evil, were easily shaken. Her passions were stronger than her principles, and were excited without difficulty by persons of cooler temperaments than herself. Sooner or later, the inflexible Burleigh always carried his point with his stormy mistress. He had terrified her with plots and rumours of plots, till he succeeded in convincing her that she was in the utmost danger from the murderous machinations of Mary Stuart, and that it would be desirable to deprive her enemies of a rallying point, by putting that unfortunate lady to death.

Elizabeth shrank from the idea of staining her hands with royal blood: but, like many others, had no objection to sin by deputy. A darker and more treacherous expedient than either a private or a judicial murder, in her own realm, was concocted between Burleigh, Leicester, and herself, as "the most convenient method of ridding herself," as Mr. Tytler observes, "of her hated and dangerous prisoner." The Scotch had sold her fugitive rebel, the Earl of Northumberland, into her hands, that she might execute her vengeance upon him; and Elizabeth in return proposed, not to sell, but to resign their injured sovereign into the cruel hands of Morton and the regent Marr, to be dealt with in *the way of justice*—words which were tantamount to Cromwell's private memorandum, "to send such and such persons to London, to be tried and executed." There was, indeed, to be the mockery of a trial, but then the children or near kinsfolk of Morton and Marr were to be put into the hands of the English queen, as hostages, that, trial or not, the execution of Mary was to take place within four hours after she was given up to their tender mercies.

The details of this iniquitous pact are clearly and succinctly

related by Mr. Tytler, and the actual documents may be seen in the State Paper Office. The instructions for Killigrew, to whom the arrangement of *the great matter*, as it was significantly termed by the diplomatic accomplices, was committed, are in Burleigh's own hand. The muniments of history afford not a more disgraceful document; nor has the light of truth ever unveiled a blacker mass of evidence than the correspondence between Killigrew and Burleigh and Leicester, during the negotiation.

Mary had, however, ceased to be an object of alarm to the rebel lords; and even her deadly foe, Morton, the wily accomplice in Darnley's murder, would not undertake the office of the Queen of England's hangman without a fee. Why should he and the regent Marr sell their souls for nought? They demanded money of the parsimonious Elizabeth—a yearly stipend withal, no less than the amount of the sum it cost her majesty for the safe keeping of her royal prisoner. The dark treaty was negotiated in the sick-chamber of the guilty Morton, with the ardent approbation of the dying Knox; and, after nearly six weeks' demur, the regent Marr gave consent, but was immediately stricken with a mortal illness, and died at the end of twenty-four hours. Morton insisted on higher terms, and, more than that, an advantageous treaty, and the presence of three thousand English troops, under the command of the Earls of Huntingdon, Essex, and Bedford, to assist at the execution, otherwise he would not undertake it.

The last condition could not be conceded, for Elizabeth's share in the transaction was to be kept secret; and for the honour of the English character, it is doubtful whether three thousand men could have been found willing to assist at so revolting a tragedy. Eagerly as Burleigh thirsted for the blood of Mary Stuart, he dared not venture the experiment; but, in his bitter disappointment at the failure of his project, he wrote to Leicester that the queen must now fall back upon her last resource, for the safety of herself and kingdom:—

“God send her majesty,” continues he, “strength of spirit to preserve God's cause, her own life, and the lives of millions of good subjects, all which are most manifestly in danger, and that only by

her delays : and so consequently she shall be the cause of the overthrow of a noble crown and realm, which shall be a prey to all that can invade it. God be merciful to us !”

The recent outrages on the Protestants in France, while they furnished Elizabeth’s Cabinet with an excuse for advocating the murder of Mary Stuart, rendered the negotiations for the queen’s marriage with a Catholic prince most distasteful to the people of England; but though apparently at an end, they were still carried on, *sub rosa*, between Elizabeth and the Court of France, through the agency of Monsieur de la Mothe.

On October 27th the Queen of France brought forth a daughter. La Mothe Fénelon waited on Elizabeth to announce to her the birth of the little princess, to assure her of the continued devotion of the Duke of Alençon, to inquire her intentions with regard to his proposal, and to inform her of the sentence passed by the Parliament of France against the late admiral and his confederates, Briquemont and Cavagnes. The two last had been executed in the presence of the king, his mother, brethren, and the King of Navarre, by torchlight, the same day that the young Queen of France had made the sanguinary monarch, Charles IX., the father of his first-born child.

Elizabeth was already well informed of a fact that had filled every heart with horror and disgust; and in her reply to the ambassador she alluded to the circumstance with dignified and deserved censure. She said “that his majesty could not have wished more for the safety of the queen, and her happy delivery, than she had done; that she could have desired that his felicity had been rendered more complete by the birth of a dauphin, but, nevertheless, the little princess would be very welcome in the world, and she prayed God to give her happiness equal to her illustrious rank and descent; and as she felt assured that she would be fair and good, she regretted that her royal father should have polluted the day of her birth by so sad a spectacle as that which his majesty had gone to see in the Grève;” and called upon the ambassador for an explanation of that circumstance.

Heartily ashamed of the conduct of his sovereign, and too

honest to defend it, La Mothe Fénelon only observed "that the day had been marked by some evil, as well as much happiness; and that his master would not have assisted at such an act if he had not had the example of other great kings on similar occasions."

In respect to the Duke of Alençon, Elizabeth said "that she had not yet received a reply to the last proposition that had been made by her ambassador, for which she had long waited; and that the picture of the state of France, as represented by him, filled her with extreme horror, for it seemed that every thing was done against those of her own religion. As for the condemnation of the admiral and the others, if their ruin were the safety of the King of France, no one could be more glad than herself that they were dead."

On November 12th, Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de Mauvissière, came over to solicit Elizabeth to accept the office of godmother to the infant Princess of France, in conjunction with the empress. She gave him his first audience at Hampton Court; on which occasion he was presented by La Mothe Fénelon, and was most graciously received by the queen. He was the bearer of five letters to her majesty—from the king, the queen, the queen-mother, monsieur, and the Duke of Alençon. The first four he delivered to her majesty after he had recited his credence, but reserved that from Alençon till after the business on which he came had been discussed. The queen expressed her full appreciation of the compliment that was paid her on this occasion, and said "that she took it as an especial mark of the king's friendship that he should wish her to be his gossip (*commère*), for which she begged to thank him, and the royal mother, grandmother, and uncles of the *petite madame*, with much affection." She then made particular inquiries, as to what would be done by the empress on this occasion, and what princess she would send as her representative to perform this office for her; and went on to say "that, for herself, she was at a loss for a person of sufficient rank to send on her part."

The Countess of Lennox, as her nearest relation, and the first lady of the blood royal, would have been a proper substitute on this occasion; but her immediate connexion with the Queen

of Scots, and the infant King James, deterred Elizabeth from allowing her to proceed to France; and to prevent the possibility of jealousy of any other lady of the Court whom she might have selected for this office, Elizabeth chose to be represented by a male proxy at the baptism of the infant Princess of France. William Somerset, Earl of Worcester, a Catholic, was the nobleman despatched by her on this mission; and her godmother's gift was a font of pure gold.

The queen kept her wily statesman, Walsingham, in France, as her ambassador, while her absurd marriage treaty was negotiating. He was eager for his recall, and his wife beset the queen, frequently with tears and lamentations, that she would permit him to come back. He was, however, still detained. Sir Thomas Smith, the clerk of the council, whom he had urged to plead for the appointment of a substitute, writes thus to Burleigh on the subject:—"I once again have moved the queen's majesty for Mr. Dale's going, and still she saith 'there are other matters between her highness and the Duke (d'Alençon) which it is not fit Dale should be made privy unto.' Howsoever the matter is, I know not the reason; but I perceive, as yet, neither his preparation, nor the loss which he is like to sustain, nor the grief of Mr. Walsingham, can make her majesty sign anything that appertaineth to his going." Smith went on to tell the queen that he had expressed a wish to Burleigh that he would return. "Beshrew you," said she, "why did you send for him?" "Marry," replied the secretary, "madam, I did wish he were here at the departing of my Lord of Worcester, to make perfect all things; first with France, and then with my Lord of Desmond into Ireland." "Why," rejoined the queen, "I knew before, he would take physic at London, and then recreate himself awhile at Tongs. I beshrew you, for sending for him." "There is no hurt done," quoth the secretary, again; "madam, I will send him word again this night, what your majesty doth say; and I think then he will not be hasty to come, although I wish he were here. And then," continued he, "I had begun some instructions for my Lord of Worcester, if any such questions were asked of him; for

such a nobleman may not seem to be dumb, or ignorant of your highness's pleasure, in such things as may be asked. Otherwise, I think it be not your majesty's pleasure that he should meddle in those—that is, for the French that be here, the marriage, and the traffic." All these her majesty liked well, but woman-like, said "that she would have the marriage first." After Smith had submitted to her majesty some other matters of business, she bade him tell Burleigh "that the Count Montgomeri, and the vidame, had been with her, and urged her to send Hawkins, or some other, with a supply of powder to Rochelle, for the besieged Huguenots, under colour of its being driven there by stress of weather ; but," she said, "that she knew not how to do that, having been solicited by the French ambassador not to aid them." "Her majesty," adds Smith, "prays you to think of it, and devise how it may be done, for she thinks it necessary ; and if it were done, Count Montgomeri possibly would end his life there, being weary of this idle life here."

In this brief detail of the consultation between Elizabeth and her Secretary of State, given by himself to his colleague, Burleigh, we have a specimen of her manner of transacting business with her ministers, and a proof of the twofold treachery of her political conduct. She could not send the supplies to the gallant Rochellers without infringing her friendly treaty with the King of France ; but she is desirous that Burleigh should devise some underhand method of sending them, nevertheless ; not from zeal to the cause of Protestantism, but in the hope that she may, by that means, get rid of her inconvenient friend, the Huguenot agitator, Montgomeri.

When the Earl of Worcester, and the splendid ambassade she had commissioned to assist at the christening of the little Princess of France, sailed, the Huguenots, despairing of further encouragement from Queen Elizabeth, sent a squadron to sea, for the purpose of intercepting her envoy, and making spoil of the rich presents with which his ship was freighted. They narrowly missed their object, but took and plundered two of the attendant vessels, and killed some of the passengers.

Elizabeth was much exasperated at this outrage ; but as it

was attributed to pirates, she sent a fleet to clear the Channel of all cruisers, and utterly refused to assist the brave Rochellers with further supplies. She was now on the most affectionate terms with those *bêtes noirs* of history—Catherine de Medicis and Charles IX., and appeared to regard the hopeful boy, Alençon, as her future husband. She again discussed the expediency of an interview, and received his letters with all due regard. The apparent earnestness of these letters, written by Alençon to Elizabeth and her ministers, induced her, at length, to signify her consent for him to come to England. Scarcely had she done so, when the election of his brother Henry to the throne of Poland caused a sudden change in her purpose. When the French ambassador, La Mothe, informed her of this event, she expressed the utmost amazement at the news; and, after offering her congratulations, she asked many questions, in a breath, on the subject, such as, “whether the emperor would take offence; whether the new king would make war against the Turks, or against the Muscovites; if he intended to espouse the Princess of Poland, and if he would leave the siege of Rochelle to go there?” This last, indeed, he did, in a manner inconsistent with his honour as a general, and his duty to his royal brother. The young Alençon succeeded to the command, but neither possessed his military talents, his experience, nor the confidence of the army.

Alençon wrote many love letters to the queen from the camp before Rochelle, reiterating his desire to come and throw himself at her feet. Elizabeth replied “that her people liked not the business in which he was engaged, and if he came to woo her with his sword stained with Protestant blood, he would be regarded by her subjects with horror; that neither she nor they could forget the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which had been perpetrated at a marriage festival.” She ended by counselling him to use his influence to mediate a peace between the contending parties in France. Young as he was, Alençon was already considered a troublesome member of the royal house of France, and had acquired the jealousy and ill-will of his two elder brothers, who were most anxious to see him removed to England.

It had been predicted to Catherine de Medicis, by a soothsayer, that all her children were born to become kings. Francis and Charles had successively worn the regal garland of France, Henry was elected King of Poland,—what, then, remained to fulfil the augury, but the marriage of Alençon with the Queen of England ?

From first to last there was, however, a suspicion that Elizabeth's preference for Leicester was the great obstacle which prevented her from concluding the matrimonial treaty with the young French prince. Mauvissière ventured to hint as much to the queen, during his embassy in 1573. "Tell your master," replied Elizabeth, "that I will never condescend to marry my subject, or make him my companion." The Court of France, after this right royal declaration, despatched a special envoy, of high rank, Chateauneuf, to solicit the queen to grant a safe conduct for the royal youth to come and woo her in person, and the young gentleman seconded the request with letters which, to use Castelnau's expression, "might have softened a frozen rock,"—they only increased the irresolution of Elizabeth.

We are told by Howes, in his edition of Stowe, that in the fifteenth year of Elizabeth's reign Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, presented her with a pair of gloves ornamented with four tufts of rose-coloured silk, and so deliciously scented, that she called it "the Earl of Oxford's perfume ;" and when she sat for her portrait invariably wore those favourite ornaments. This weak-minded young peer, presuming on the favour of the queen, and his all-powerful position, as the son-in-law of Burleigh, grossly insulted the accomplished Sir Philip Sidney, before the French ambassador, in the tennis-court, by calling him a puppy. Sir Philip retorted, with cutting scorn, "that all the world knew that dogs were the parents of puppies," and added his defiance. Oxford had no inclination to measure swords with the gallant Sidney, and the privy council interfered to prevent the encounter, but, as Sidney insisted on an apology, or personal satisfaction, her majesty was entreated to interpose.

Elizabeth sent for Sir Philip, and told him "that there was a great difference in degree between earls and private gentlemen, and that princes were bound to support the nobility, and to

insist on their being treated with proper respect. Sir Philip replied with a noble spirit of independence "that place was never intended to privilege wrong—witness herself, who, sovereign though she were, must be content to govern by the laws." In respect to his adversary's superior station, he besought her majesty to remember "that, although the earl were a great lord, yet was he no lord over him, and that the difference of degrees between free men entitled him of the highest rank to no other homage than precedence. He then reminded her of her father's policy, in giving the gentry free and safe appeal to the Throne against the oppression of the grandees, finding it wisdom, by the stronger combination of numbers, to keep down the greater in power.

Elizabeth testified no displeasure at the boldness of her intrepid young courtier, yet he soon after retired into the country, where he employed his leisure in the composition of his elegant romance, the *Arcadia*.

CHAPTER VIII

Elizabeth's talents as a peace-sovereign—Renews the treaty with Alençon—Plans an interview with him—Her new year's gifts—Receives three night-caps from the Queen of Scots—Note to her godson—Anecdotes of her private life—Her persecutions—Offered the sovereignty of the Netherlands—Her favour to the envoy of Alençon—She excites Leicester's jealousy—Discovers Leicester's marriage—Her anger—Incognito visit of Alençon (*now Anjou*)—The council oppose Elizabeth's marriage with him—Her irritation, anxiety, and demurs—Characteristics of Elizabeth—Discrimination of character—Her patronage of Drake—Second visit of Anjou to England—Elizabeth's loving demeanour to him—Her ladies oppose the marriage—Elizabeth's fondness for Anjou—Accompanies him part of his journey homewards—Her love-verses—Regrets for his loss—Her interview with Edmund Campian—Her letter to Burleigh—Her maids-of-honour—Her illegitimate brother, Sir J. Perrot—His insolent speeches regarding her—She refuses to sign his death warrant—Her cruel usage of Ireland.

ELIZABETH's real greatness was as a peace-sovereign; she was formed and fitted for domestic government, and her admirable talents for statistics would have established a golden age in

England, if she had been contented to employ her energies wholly as a civiliser. Her foreign wars were a series of expensive blunders, injurious to commerce, little conducive to the military glory of the realm, and attended with a sacrifice of the flower of the English chivalry. If she had not interfered in the quarrels between other sovereigns and their subjects, there would have been no necessity for the imposition of repeated property-taxes on her own, to defray the expenses of the needless wars in which her crooked policy entangled her, and to pay the pensions of the Scotch patriots who devoured so large a portion of English gold, and beguiled her into the ungracious office of jailer to their queen—an office which entailed upwards of eighteen years of internal discord on her realm, planted the first thorns in her own diadem, and sullied the brightness of her annals with stains of indelible blackness.

Alas ! that the biographer of Elizabeth should be compelled to turn from the lovely picture of an enlightened female sovereign, smiling on the labours of the children of her own subjects, blended with those of the little Flemish refugees in the Sandwich school of industry, to depict her presiding like Atropos, over racks and gibbets, and all the horrible panoply of religious and political tyranny.

Soon after Elizabeth's return from a Kentish progress of this year, the following strange circumstance occurred : a crazy fanatic, named Peter Burchet, having persuaded himself, by the misapplication of certain Scripture texts, that it was lawful to kill all who opposed the gospel—that is to say, those who took a different view of Church government from the furious sect to which he belonged—wounded the famous naval commander, Hawkins, with his dagger, mistaking him for Sir Christopher Hatton, whom he intended to despatch as an enemy of the Puritans.² The queen was so much incensed at this outrage, that she ordered justice to be done on Burchet, in the summary way of martial law, and directed her secretary to bring the commission to her after dinner for her signature. Sussex, her lord chamberlain, wrote in great haste to Burleigh, to apprise him of her majesty's intention ; and that he and all her lords-

in-waiting, were in consternation at the royal mandate. "What will become of this act after dinner," says he, "your lordship shall hear to-night." Her prudent counsellors succeeded, finally, in convincing her majesty that the ceremony of a trial was necessary before an Englishman could be executed for any offence whatsoever. It appears almost incredible, that Elizabeth, after reigning sixteen years, should require to be enlightened on this point ; and to be informed that martial law was only used in times of open rebellion.

The terror of the plague was always uppermost in the minds of all persons in the sixteenth century, at every instance of sudden death. One day in November, 1573, Queen Elizabeth was conversing with her ladies in her privy chamber, at Greenwich Palace, when, on a sudden, the mother of the maids was seized with illness, and expired directly in her presence. Queen Elizabeth was so much alarmed at this circumstance, that in less than an hour she left her palace at Greenwich, and went to Westminster, where she remained.

The year 1574 commenced with new efforts on the part of the Court of France to conclude the matrimonial treaty between the Duke of Alençon and Elizabeth. Mauvissière arrived in January, to woo the queen in his behalf, and to solicit that she would send him a safe conduct to visit her, and plead his own cause. In a recently discovered letter, from Elizabeth to Dr. Dale, on this subject, she exhibits her usual caution and feminine vacillation. She says—

"The French ambassador sithens the return of our servant Randolph, hath sundry times had access unto us, requiring our answer, whether we could allow of the coming over of the Duke of Alençon, upon the view of his portraiture, brought over by our said servant."

She goes on to state that she has had sundry conferences with her council, and finds they were of opinion that it might impair the amity between England and France, if, on coming, there should be no liking between her and the duke ; that she understood, moreover, that a fresh enterprise against Rochelle was intended, and new jealousy and misliking conceived in her subjects' hearts against the match. That she had represented

these things to the French Ambassador, but he persisted in urging her to grant a public interview to the prince, which she had declined. Her majesty, however, goes on to say "that if none of these doubts, that she has suggested, will deter monsieur le duc from coming over in some sort of disguise ; then Dale is to tell the king from her" that she wishes that the gentleman in whose company he may come over, as one of his followers, may not be a person of such high rank as the Duke de Montmorenci, nor accompanied with any great train ; "for," pursues she, "if there follow no liking between us after a view taken the one of the other, the more secretly it be handled, the least touch will it be to our honours."

The plan suggested by Elizabeth, for obtaining a private view of Alençon, did not suit the policy of the royal family of France, whose object it was to induce her to commit herself irrevocably in the negotiation. Charles IX. offered to come to the opposite coast of Picardy, ostensibly for the benefit of his health, bringing his brother in his train, whom he would send over as a wooer, in grand state, to Dover, whither Queen Elizabeth should come to meet him. This plan Elizabeth affectedly declined, as too decided a step, towards a suitor, to be taken by a maid. The truth was, she meant to receive personally all the homage and flatteries of a new lover, without in any way committing herself in public opinion. To this end, she proposed that Alençon should slip over from the coast of Picardy, to Lord Cobham's seat, near Gravesend, from whence he was to take barge privately, and land at the water stairs of Greenwich Palace, where she would be ready to welcome him, with all the delights her private household could afford.

This fine scheme was cut short by the discovery of a political conspiracy, of which the hopeful youth Alençon was found to be the head. The quartan ague of Charles IX. was, in reality, a fatal consumption ; and all his people perceived that he was dropping into the grave. Alençon, seeing that the next heir, his brother Henry, King of Poland, was absent, began to intrigue with the Protestant leaders to be placed on the throne of France ; which plot being discovered by his mother, he, with

Henry, King of Navarre, were committed prisoners to the Castle of Vincennes.

Alençon basely betrayed his allies, La Mole and Corconnas, and the whole Protestant interest, to make peace with his own family. Some suspicion existed that Queen Elizabeth herself was at the bottom of the plot. However this might be, its discovery entirely broke off the marriage treaty between the mature queen, and the ill-conditioned imp, Alençon, for Catherine de Medicis caused La Mothe to ask Elizabeth, "whether she had received so ill an impression of her son, that she would not go on with the marriage treaty?"

To which Elizabeth replied, "I cannot be so ungrateful as to think ill of a prince who thinks so well of me, but I must tell you decisively, that I will not take a husband with irons on his feet."

He was released on this hint, and used by Elizabeth as a ready tool for embarrassing the Government of his brother, as the head of a middle party.

One of those dialogues, often narrated in ambassadors' despatches at that era, took place between the virgin queen and La Mothe, after the death of Charles IX. The affairs of the new King, Henry III., then absent in Poland, were in an awkward predicament; and his faithful ambassador, fearful lest her majesty of England might retain some spiteful reminiscences of the uncivil mode in which Henry had, when Duke of Anjou, broken off his marriage with her, ventured to deprecate her wrath, by saying that "a cloud had a little passed between his new sovereign and her, which he hoped would not cast any blight on their alliance."

The queen, who wore mourning for her good brother, Charles IX., and had not only "composed her face very strongly to grief and dolour," but had let a tear fall on her black dress, answered this speech by throwing out a hint, that another marriage proposal from him was not altogether unexpected by her courtiers. "The cloud you speak of," she said, to the ambassador, "has wholly passed by, and many other things have intervened, which have made me forget all the past; indeed, it was but yesterday, that one of my people observed to me, 'that I had made a difficulty of espousing Henry, because he was not a

king ; he was at present doubly king, therefore I ought to be content." I replied," continued Queen Elizabeth, "that Henry III. had always been right royal, but that a matter more high than crowns had parted us ; even religion, which had often made crowned heads renounce the world altogether, in order to follow God, and that neither I nor the king ought to repine at what they had done."

This would have been a most respectable version of the affair, if it had been true ; but, of course, no one disputed the turn the queen chose to give to the rupture of this absurd marriage treaty, which, notwithstanding all she said regarding religion, she was desirous of renewing.

Whether from a spirit of mischief, or from a downright blundering want of tact, inexcusable in a queen who intermeddled so restlessly in public affairs, Catherine de Medicis wrote to Queen Elizabeth a letter of apology for her son's former rudeness ; and this forced the English Queen to remember most unwillingly all impertinences past, which she had very prudently forgotten. The discussion of this *malapropos* apology, occurred in July, 1574, at a State audience, when the French ambassador delivered to the maiden majesty of England the first credentials addressed to her by Henry III., as King of France. Her demeanour, when she took the packet, was a part got up with her usual study of stage effect. First, on opening it, she threw her eyes on the signature, and heaved an audible sigh, at finding CHARLES no longer ; she then observed very graciously, "that it was now a HENRY that she found there ;" and she read at length, very curiously, the said letter. What she found therein is not stated, but her comments on its contents were original enough. "She was not," she said, exactly a lioness ; yet she allowed she had the temperament, and was the issue of the lion, and that accordingly as the King of France behaved placably to her, so he should find her soft and tractable, as he could desire ; but if he were rough, she should take the trouble to be as rude and offensive as possible.

This prelude was a little ominous, and Elizabeth began to give angry hints of a circumstance which would probably interrupt

the harmony between the two kingdoms ; so saying, she put into the ambassador's hands the letter she had lately received from Queen Catherine, and desired him to read it through. He declared he was thoroughly aghast, and unable to guess what was coming ; however, he began to read, skipping over the ciphered portion, and read on till he came to the paragraph wherein Catherine apologised for her son's giddiness, "in having *miscalled* her English majesty, and hoped that she would not bear any enmity to him on that account." The ambassador declared ' that he stopped short, and looked at Queen Elizabeth, but he saw she had not got her speech ready ; and she bade him, "go on, and finish the letter." At the end, the execution of the Count de Montgomeri, the Huguenot leader, was announced to Elizabeth—a circumstance likely to enrage her, since she had long harboured him among the Channel Islands, whence he had invaded France repeatedly.

Elizabeth took no notice of the catastrophe of her *protégé* ; but commented on the apology offered by Catherine de Medicis, by saying "that if Henry III. had miscalled her, she either did not know, or had forgotten it. Not that she had been well treated in the marriage proposal ; for when all was agreed upon, and she had arranged that he was to have the exercise of his religion in private, and she had sent a councillor to signify her compliance, it was found that Henry had taken a directly contrary resolution. And though she could not justly blame him for having averted a marriage with *an old woman*, yet she must once again repeat that her good affection and kind intentions deserved a more civil return."

The poor ambassador could only remind her, by way of reply, "that all the impediments had proceeded from herself, and that if she had been willing, his king had now been all her own."

This compliment was graciously taken ; and La Mothe felt assured, as he expressly sent word to France, the Queen of England's end in the whole conversation was, to induce a new proposal from the bachelor King of France, which would now certainly meet with a more prosperous conclusion.

Elizabeth finished the discussion by calling Leicester ; he came

and knelt before her, and soon after she rose and withdrew. Her expectation of a new offer from Henry III. was useless. That monarch had fallen in love on his homeward journey from Poland with Louise of Lorraine, a pretty but portionless princess of his own age, and he married her at his coronation, in the ensuing February ; to the infinite indignation of Elizabeth, which she displayed by a series of bickerings with the French Court.

The same year a private marriage was made between Lord Charles Lennox and the daughter of the Countess of Shrewsbury. As the bridegroom stood next to his mother, after Mary Stuart and her son, in the natural order of the regal succession, Elizabeth was much offended at his presuming to marry, and, as a token of her displeasure, committed both the intriguing mothers, the Countess of Lennox and her of Shrewsbury, to prison. They made their peace by laying the blame of what had happened on the captive Queen of Scots.

Even Burleigh came in for a share of the irritation of temper which the jealousy of Elizabeth's disposition induced at this crisis. He had been to Buxton, which had just become a fashionable place of resort for gouty and rheumatic sufferers, the Queen of Scots having derived some benefit from her visits to that place. Elizabeth took great offence at her premier choosing to resort to the same place, although his maladies were of the kind for which its waters were esteemed so efficacious. He writes, in a pitiful strain, to the Earl of Shrewsbury, of the rating he had received for this offence :—" Her majesty did conceive that my being there was by means of your lordship and Lady Shrewsbury, to enter into intelligence with the Queen of Scots ; and at my return to her majesty's (Elizabeth) presence I had very sharp reproofs for my going to Buxton, with plain charging me for favouring the Queen of Scots, and that in so earnest a sort as I never looked for, knowing my integrity to her majesty." Thus all in turn drank of the poisoned chalice their own injustice had brewed, and the captive was scarcely more wretched than mutual doubts and recriminating suspicions made the powerful sovereign, her prime minister, and the great noble who played the jailer to the oppressed lady.

The commencement of the year 1575 found Elizabeth in high good humour; she received the congratulations and compliments of Monsieur de la Mothe on the New Year's day very graciously, the ambassador adroitly taking the opportunity of presenting to Elizabeth, as a New Year's gift from the Queen of Scots, a very elegant head-dress of net-work, wrought by her own hand very delicately, likewise the collar, cuffs, and other little pieces *en suite*; all which Queen Elizabeth received amiably, and admired exceedingly. In the course of the spring, La Mothe brought her another gift of three night-caps, worked by the hand of her prisoner; but a demur took place regarding the night-caps, and they were for a time left on the hands of the ambassador; for Elizabeth declared "that great commotions and jealousies had taken place in the privy council, because she had accepted the gifts of the Queen of Scots." Finally, she accepted the night-caps, with this characteristic speech to La Mothe:—

"Tell the Queen of Scots that I am older than she is, and when people arrive at my age they take all they can get with both hands, and only give with their little finger." On this maxim, though jocosely expressed, Elizabeth seems to have acted all her life.

On February 8th, Parliament met, and another tremendous property tax was imposed on the people, although it was a year of dearth. Elizabeth composed a long classical and metaphorical speech, or rather essay, on the difficulties of her position as a female sovereign, to be delivered from the throne at the opening of the session; but she did not open the House in person, and some doubts have been entertained whether this singular composition was used. She sent a copy of it to her godson, Harrington, with this interesting note addressed to himself:

"Boy Jack,—I have made a clerk write fair my poor words for thine use, as it cannot be such striplings have entrance into Parliament as yet. Ponder them in thy hours of leisure, and play with them, till they enter thine understanding; so shalt thou hereafter, perchance, find some good fruits thereof, when thy godmother is out of remembrance; and I do this because thy father was ready to serve and love us in trouble and thrall."

Harrington's delightful letters are full of characteristic records

of his royal godmother, whom he dearly loves, although he cannot resist relating many whimsical traits, both of her violence, cunning, and vanity, interspersed with many encomiums on her virtues, with now and then, "like angel visits, few and far between," a fact illustrative of noble feeling.

On May 17th died the venerable Archbishop Parker, and on June 22nd, less than three weeks after his death, the horrible fact is recorded, by Stowe, that "two Dutchmen, Anabaptists, were burnt in Smithfield, who died in great horror, with roaring and crying." Foxe, the martyrologist, to his honour, wrote an eloquent letter to Elizabeth, imploring her not to sully the annals of her reign, and the practice of the reformed Church, by burning for heterodoxy. His intercession was unavailing to save the two wretched foreigners from the flames, but Elizabeth's persecutions were afterwards of a bloody and not a fiery character. Unfortunately, the queen was an advocate for the use of torture, though declared, by the high authority of Fortescue, and other enlightened commentators on the Constitution of England, to be contrary to the law.

The royal progresses, this summer, were through the Midland counties, and included the visit to Kenilworth which the genius of Scott has made familiar.

Elizabeth's attention was recalled from the idle joyaunce of progresses and pageants, by the important appeals that were made to her by the oppressed Protestants in the Low Countries. St. Aldegonde, the friend and confidant of the Prince of Orange, with other deputies, came over to England, to implore her to accept the sovereignty of their States, as the descendant and representative of their ancient counts, through her illustrious ancestress, Philippa of Hainault. This embassy, and its result, is briefly summed up in two lines by Collins, in his *Ode to Liberty* :

"Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,
Whose crown a British queen refused."

Elizabeth was not prepared to contest this mighty adjunct to the Spanish Empire with Philip, and she replied evasively,

offered publicly to mediate between him and the States, and privately encouraged the deputies to continue their resistance. They proposed to throw themselves on the protection of France, but from this step she earnestly dissuaded them, and privately supplied them with pecuniary aid. She also, by her intrigues with the Duke of Alençon, incited him to coalesce with the King of Navarre and the Huguenot party in France, thus furnishing Henry III. with sufficient employment at home to prevent him from interfering in the affairs of the States. The details of these struggles belong to general history. On January 7th, Queen Elizabeth finally concluded an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the States, engaging to assist them with a loan of £100,000, with 5000 foot soldiers, and 1000 horse. She soon afterwards employed Casimir, the brother of the Elector Palatine, who proceeded as her lieutenant, with 12,000 German auxiliaries, to the Low Countries, at the expense of England. The German mercenaries committed so many excesses, that the poor Dutchmen found their friends even more intolerable than their foes, and requested to be placed under the protection of the Queen of England's suitor, Francis of Alençon, who had now assumed the title of Duke of Anjou, formerly borne by his brother Henry III. Elizabeth at first regarded this requisition with jealous suspicion as a manœuvre of the King of France, but there was no love between the brethren, and Anjou professed himself devoted to her interests. He was, indeed, a convenient tool, ready to be employed in any service, whereby his own personal advancement might be forwarded.

Soon after Elizabeth's return from the progress which had occupied the summer he sent his favourite, Monsieur Simiers, to plead his suit to her. This envoy proved so agreeable to her majesty, that she invited him thrice a week to her private parties, and never appeared so happy as in his company. The greatest jealousy was excited among her ministers at the favour manifested by their royal mistress to the insinuating foreigner. They even suspected that she confided to him her most secret thoughts. Leicester, infuriated at the attention her majesty bestowed on Simiers, attributed his influence to sorcery and other unhallowed

arts. It was quite apparent to every one that if Elizabeth had ever cherished undue regard for Leicester, she had conquered her passion. Her quondam governess, Mrs. Ashley, who had not changed her intriguing habits, though now in the vale of years, ventured to plead the cause of Leicester to her royal mistress, and from the nature of the reply, she must have recommended the queen to marry him. "What!" exclaimed Elizabeth, with tenfold of her father's pride; "shall I so far forget myself, as to prefer a poor servant of my own making, to the first princes in Christendom?"

If it be true that Elizabeth actually gave a promise of marriage to Leicester, in the presence of one of her ladies, Mrs. Ashley was probably the witness of the plight. Be this as it may, the declaration of her present feelings on the subject was definitive. Leicester himself had previously ventured to cross-question his royal mistress as to her intentions on the French match, and being deceived by the subtlety of her dealing into the idea that she really meant to wed the Duke of Anjou, considered his own ambitious hopes at an end, and privately married the widowed Countess of Essex, of whom he was deeply enamoured. Simiers, having penetrated this secret, gave immediate information of it to the queen, as he suspected that her regard for Leicester was the principal obstacle to her marriage with Anjou. Elizabeth was so greatly offended with Leicester, that she ordered him not to stir from Greenwich Castle, and would have sent him to the Tower, had she not been dissuaded by the Earl of Sussex, from an action liable to constructions so derogatory to her dignity as a female sovereign. Leicester, who could not forgive Simiers for his interference, has been accused of practising against his life, because one day when Simiers was attending her majesty to her barge, not far from Greenwich, a gun was discharged from a neighbouring boat, and one of the queen's bargemen was shot through both his arms, within six feet of the queen's person. Every one in the barge was amazed, and the poor man bled profusely. Elizabeth did not lose her presence of mind, though she believed that the shot was aimed at her life; she took off her scarf, and threw it to the bargeman

to bind up his wounds withal, telling him "to be of good cheer, for that he should never want, for the bullet was meant for her, though it had hit him." All present admired her intrepidity, but her future conduct was still more admirable, for finding when the man, Thomas Appletree, was put upon his trial, that the piece had gone off by sheer accident, she not only pardoned him, but interceded with his master to retain him in his service.

It was on this occasion that Elizabeth made the following gracious declaration, "that she would not believe anything against her subjects that loving parents would not believe of their children." She, however, took the precaution of declaring by public proclamation, that the French envoys and their servants were under her royal protection, and forbade any person from molesting them on peril of severe punishment.

On June 16th, Simiers demanded a definitive answer from the queen on the subject of his master's suit for her hand, and she replied, as she had done many times before, "that she could not decide on marrying a man whom she had never seen."

At this declaration, the *mounseer*, as the French prince was styled in England, acted, for once in his life, like a man of spirit, and, to deprive the royal spinster of her last excuse for either deferring his happiness or disappointing his ambition, crossed the seas in disguise, attended by only two servants, and unexpectedly presenting himself at the gates of Greenwich Palace, demanded permission to throw himself at her majesty's feet. Elizabeth was charmed with the romantic gallantry of her youthful wooer. His ugly nose and marred complexion were regarded, even by her dainty eye, as trivial defects, so greatly was she captivated with his sprightliness, his attention, and his flattery. She had been accustomed, from hearing his personal disadvantages exaggerated, by the party who were adverse to the marriage, to think of him as a ridiculous, ill-favoured, mis-shapen urchin, and she found him a very bold, insinuating young man, and vastly agreeable, in spite of his ugliness. He was the first, in fact, the *only* one, among Elizabeth's numerous train of royal lovers, who had the spirit to court

in person, and the impression made by his advent appears to have been, while it lasted, such as to justify the bold step he had taken. Elizabeth was guilty of a few tender follies on his account. In one of her wardrobe books we find the following quaint entry of a toy evidently devised at this period :—"Item, one little flower of gold, with a frog thereon, and therein mounseer, his *phismomye*, and a little pearl pendant." Query, was this whimsical conceit a love-token from the Duke of Alençon to his royal *bel' amie*, and the frog designed not as a ridiculous, but a sentimental, allusion to his country ?

In the course of a few days he succeeded in ingratiating himself so thoroughly with Elizabeth, that he departed with the fullest expectations of winning the august bride, for whose hand the mightiest kings, the most distinguished conquerors, and the handsomest men in Europe had contended in vain.

The queen summoned her council in the beginning of October, to meet and deliberate on the subject of her marriage with the Duke of Anjou. Their first debates were with each other, on the unsuitableness of an union between the parties on the score of disparity of age, as the prince was but twenty-three, and her majesty forty-six. The point was discussed with great freedom, it would appear. The minutes remain in Burleigh's hand, in which the opinions of the differing privy councillors are placed in opposition to each other, under the heads of Perils and Remedies. To say the truth, the non-contents have exceedingly the best of the argument. Amongst these, the opinion of Sir Ralph Sadler is remarkable for its uncourtier-like bluntness. The oracular sentences which he delivered were as follows :—"In years the queen might be his mother. Doubtfulness of issue, more than before—few old maids escape." Sussex and Hunsdon advocated the marriage as a measure of expediency for the security of the queen's person and government. Burleigh, in compliance with her commands, seconded their reasons, but not honestly. Leicester and Hatton did the same at first, but finally pretended to be converts to the strong arguments of Bromley, Sadler, Mildmay, and Sidney against it. On the 7th they waited upon her majesty in a body,

and requested "to be informed of her pleasure on the subject, and they would endeavour to make themselves conformable to it."

The queen, who expected to have been furnished with a legitimate excuse for following her own inclination, in the shape of a petition for her to marry, was surprised and offended at their caution, and, bursting into tears of anger and vexation, she reproached them for their long disputations, "as if it were doubtful whether there would be more surety for her and her realm, than if she were to marry and have a child of her own to inherit, and so to continue the line of Henry VIII." In conclusion, she condemned her own simplicity in committing so delicate a matter to them, for "she had expected," she said, "that they would have unanimously petitioned her to proceed with the marriage, rather than have made doubt of it, and being much troubled she requested them to leave her till the afternoon."

The afternoon found her majesty very ungraciously disposed ; she used passionate and bitter vituperation against those who had opposed the match ; she even endeavoured herself to refute the objections that had been made to it in council, and she issued an edict forbidding the matter to be touched upon in the pulpit, by any preacher whatsoever. Burleigh finding that the queen was not to be crossed, openly compelled the council to assume a semblance of compliance with her wishes, by discussing of the marriage articles with the Duke of Anjou's procurator, Simiers. Nothing could, however, be more unpopular in England than the idea of such a marriage. Was the lawful heiress of the crown to be immured and kept in hourly fear of death because she was a member of the Church of Rome, while the sovereign herself, the defender of the Protestant faith, wilfully endangered the stability of the newly established Church, by entering into a matrimonial treaty with a Roman Catholic ? The inconsistency and want of moral justice involved in such a proceeding was felt by the professors of every varying creed throughout the realm.

The queen acknowledged, to a certain degree, the force of the objections of her subjects against the marriage, but was troubled with a perverse inclination to act according to her

own pleasure in the matter. Deeply offended at the demurs of her Cabinet, she asked the advice of the accomplished Sir Philip Sidney, who at that time filled the office of Cup-Bearer to her majesty, and from whom she probably expected to receive counsel more agreeable to her apparent wishes on the subject. Sir Philip Sidney, with all the graceful courtesy and elegance of a finished gentleman, possessed a lofty spirit of independence. He never condescended to practise the arts of courtier-craft, and when his sovereign asked him to give her his opinion without disguise, he addressed to her a long and energetic letter, beginning, "Most feared and beloved, most sweet and gracious sovereign." After which honeyed words, he proceeds to tell her many bold truths on the impolicy of the measure :—

"How the hearts of your people," says he, "will be galled, if not aliened, when they shall see you take a husband, a Frenchman and a Papist, in whom the very common people know this, that he is the son of the Jezabel of our age—that his brother made oblation of his own sister's marriage, the easier to make massacre of our brethren in religion. As long as he is monsieur in might, and a Papist in profession, he neither can nor will greatly shield you, and if he grow to be king, his defence will be like Ajax' shield, which rather weighed down than defended, those that bare it."

The queen having solicited the opinion of Sidney, and, respecting his integrity, had the philosophy to take his remonstrance in good part, but all this opposition brought the marriage negotiation to a pause. Elizabeth had felt the force of Sidney's remonstrances. "If her highness mean to marry," writes Hatton to Walsingham, "I wonder she so delayeth it. If she do but temporize, and will leave it at the last, what may we look for, then, but that the Pope, with Spain and France, will yoke themselves, in all ireful revenge, according to their solemn combination so long ago concluded on against us?" The fact was, that neither the French Court, her ambassador there, nor her most trusted servants at home, could discover what were her real intentions in the matter. Whether she exactly knew them herself appears to be doubtful.

"The marriage is on book again," writes Sir George Bowes to his brother Robert, the treasurer of Berwick, "and her highness seemeth now as forward as ever she hath been, at

any time before, and yet Sir William Drury, whom you well know to be a setter forth of that cause, having occasion to ride unto the Court on Thursday last, and using some speeches upon that matter to her majesty, did, with great reverence, inquire of her majesty's disposition that way, who, giving him a great clap of the shoulder with her hand, answered, 'I will never marry; but I will ever bear good will and favour to those who have liked and furthered the same.'" She meant those who had advocated the marriage.

Among the great events of this period may be reckoned the death of Elizabeth's great minister, Sir Nicholas Bacon, generally distinguished by the title of "My lord keeper." It is recorded that when the queen visited him at his modest country residence, she was pleased to observe that his house was too little for him. "No, madam," replied he, "you have made me too big for my house." He afterwards had the honour of entertaining his royal mistress in his stately mansion of Gorhambury, which he built, probably in consequence of her remark on his former abode. Among the elaborate dainties which furnished forth the memorable banquet for the maiden monarch and her Court, was a hog roasted whole, garnished with links of sausages, a queer culinary pun on the name of the learned host.

Elizabeth one day asked Sir Nicholas Bacon "what he thought of a monopoly licence she had granted?" "Madam," he said, "if I must speak the truth, I will reply in the Latin proverb,—*Licentia omnes deteriores sumus*—we are all the worse for licence."

The splendid talents of his son, the learned and eloquent Francis Bacon, afterwards the great Lord Bacon of Verulam, early attracted the notice of Queen Elizabeth, who was wont to call him playfully, "her little lord keeper," and predicted that he would one day become a distinguished man. He proved, it is well known, one of the brightest ornaments of her reign, a diamond of unrivalled lustre, though not without a flaw. His records of Elizabeth are among the most favourable that contemporaries have preserved of her character. Eulogiums from such a source are calculated to make a strong impression

on every reader, even when no supporting facts are given ; and there can be little doubt that Elizabeth is indebted for much of her posthumous popularity to the powerful pen of Bacon. Like his father, he was a great advocate for the celibacy of his royal mistress.

“Female reigns,” says he, “are usually eclipsed by marriage, and all the glory transferred to the husband ; while those queens who live single have none to share it with them. And this was more peculiarly the case of Queen Elizabeth, for she had no supporters of her Government but those of her own making—no brother, no uncle, nor any other of the royal family to partake her cares and assist her Government. The ministers whom she advanced to places of trust she kept so tight a rein upon, and so dispensed her favours, that they were continually solicitous to please her, whilst she ever remained mistress of herself.”

Elizabeth's regnal talents were shown in the acuteness of her perceptive powers, and the unerring discrimination with which she selected her ministers and great law officers, and in some instances converted those into loyal servants who might have turned their abilities to her annoyance. It is a tradition in the Egerton family, that she was once in court when Thomas Egerton, a distinguished barrister, was pleading against the Crown side, in some action in the Court of Queen's Bench. She was so much struck with his eloquence and professional skill, that she exclaimed, “By my troth, he shall never plead against me again.” She immediately appointed him Queen's Counsel—in modern parlance, gave him a silk gown ; he attained the dignities of Solicitor-General and Lord-Keeper in her reign.

In November, the celebrated navigator, Francis Drake, returned from his great voyage of discovery round the globe ; and in the following spring the queen did him the honour of going on board his ship at Deptford, where she partook of a collation, knighted him, and consented to share the golden fruits of his succeeding adventures. As some of Drake's enterprises were of a decidedly piratical character, and attended with circumstances of plunder and cruelty to the infant colonies of Spain, the policy of Elizabeth, in sanctioning his deeds,

is doubtful ; in a moral point of view, it appears unjustifiable. The English nobles, to whom Drake offered costly presents of gold and silver plate, refused to accept them ; " which," says Camden, " angered him exceedingly, as it implied an intimation that they had not been honourably acquired." The Spanish Court demanded restitution of the spoils, but in vain. Drake commenced his career in life as the apprentice to a pilot at Upnor, who finally bequeathed to him his little barque, which proved the foundation of his fortunes.

But for the delusive matrimonial treaty between Elizabeth and the worthless heir-presumptive of France, the Netherlands would have been at this crisis the theatre of a three-fold contention between Spain, England, and France. The object of the States was to obtain the united protection of the two last named powers against their legitimate oppressor, Philip. They deemed they should secure this by conferring the sovereignty on the Duke of Anjou, whom they and half the world regarded as the husband-elect of the maiden monarch of England ; and by this measure they trusted to secure the friendship of both Elizabeth and Henry III. Their calculation was, in the end, a sagacious one, but the suspicious temper of Elizabeth led her to take the alarm, in the first instance, at not having been consulted by Anjou ere he presumed to accept the preferment that was thus flatteringly offered him.

Her displeasure was, however, quickly mollified. She not only acquiesced in the election of Duke Francis of Anjou to the sovereignty of the Low Countries, but assisted him with the subsidy of one hundred thousand crowns ; and added a hint of her favourable disposition towards their marriage. An embassy extraordinary was immediately sent from the Court of France ; of which the Prince Dauphin of Auvergne was the principal. They were received in the Thames with the greatest honours by Elizabeth's command, and landed at the Tower under a salvo of artillery. They were conducted by the young Philip, Earl of Arundel, the representative of the unfortunate Duke of Norfolk, Sir Philip Sidney, Fulk Greville, and Lord Windsor, who were esteemed four of the most honourable

gentlemen of the Court, to a new banqueting house, which had been erected for their reception at Westminster, where they were entertained in the most sumptuous manner. Among the pageants, sports, and princely recreations that had been prepared in honour of these distinguished foreigners, a tournament had been in contemplation; but such was the distaste manifested by the great body of her people against the French marriage, that the queen, apprehending serious tumults from any public collision with the noble foreigners, issued a proclamation, that none of her subjects should either strike or draw weapon within four miles of London or the Court.

Although the matrimonial negotiations had been renewed, in compliance with Elizabeth's insinuated wish, she was no sooner pressed to conclude the treaty, than she started fresh objections, and proposed, in lieu, one of perpetual alliance between the crowns of England and France. The King of France replied, "that he was ready to sign such a league, as soon as the Queen of England should have fulfilled her promise to his brother." At length it was mutually agreed that "the duke, his associates, and servants, being no English subjects, should have liberty to use their own religion, in their own houses, without molestation. The Duke of Anjou, and the Queen of England, within six weeks after the ratification of the articles specified, shall personally contract marriage in England."

It was stipulated that, as soon as the marriage was completed, the duke should assume the title of king, but the question of his being crowned should be referred to the consideration of Parliament. In the event of his succeeding to the crown of France, his eldest son, by Queen Elizabeth, was to inherit that realm, and the second that of England.

When it is remembered that her majesty was in her forty-ninth year, the contingency of two sovereigns proceeding from her marriage with the youthful heir of France appears somewhat visionary. It was, however, further provided that, in the event of the queen dying before the duke, he was to have the tuition of all their children, till the sons should attain the age of eighteen, and the daughters fifteen. He was to settle upon the queen,

in dowry, 40,000 crowns per annum, out of his lands at Berri, and the queen was, by Act of Parliament, to secure to him, for his life, such a pension as she might please to appoint. In other matters, the treaty was framed according to the marriage articles between the late Queen Mary and Philip of Spain.

Before the six weeks, stipulated for the fulfilment of this treaty, had expired, Elizabeth faltered in her resolution, and attempted to evade her engagement. Yet she professed to bear a most sovereign love to her betrothed, and that her demurs only proceeded from her doubts how her subjects stood affected towards her marriage with him.

The duke, who, whatever were his faults as a politician and a man, was an accomplished wooer, resolved to take no refusal from any one but the queen herself. He had had the good fortune to achieve a successful military enterprise in compelling the Prince of Parma to raise the siege of Cambray, and, crossing the seas, hastened to plead his own cause to his august lady-love. He arrived early in November, 1582.

Elizabeth gave him, not only an honourable, but a most loving reception, and, for a time, appeared to abandon herself to the intoxication of an ardent passion. She declared "that he was the most deserving and constant of all her lovers," and even made political engagements with him, without consulting her ministers. On the anniversary of her coronation, which was, as usual, celebrated with great pomp, she, in the presence of the foreign ambassadors, and her whole Court, placed a ring on his finger, which was regarded, by all present, as a pledge of her intention to become his wife; and from that time the prince was looked upon as her betrothed husband. Her conduct at this time was either that of the most enamoured of women, or the most unblushing of coquettes. Her gift of the ring was duly reported by the French and Dutch envoys: bonfires, and salvos of artillery, manifested the satisfaction of these countries at the prospect of so glorious an alliance.

Her own people took the matter differently. Leicester, Hatton, and Walsingham were determined to prevent the marriage, and laid their plans accordingly. They were among

the commissioners whom the queen had commanded to prepare the articles, and also a paper, prescribing the rites for the celebration of the nuptials. This paper was actually drawn up and subscribed, but, the same evening, as soon as she returned to her chamber, all her ladies, who had received their lesson from the anti-matrimonial cabal, got up a concert of weeping and wailing, they surrounded their royal mistress, and, throwing themselves at her feet, implored her to pause ere she took so fatal a step as contracting marriage, at her time of life, with a youthful husband, by whom she would, probably, be despised and forsaken. They represented all her sister had suffered from her joyless union with Philip of Spain, and entreated her "not to share her power and glory with a foreign spouse, or to sully her fair fame as a Protestant queen by vowing obedience to a Catholic husband."

Elizabeth passed the night without sleep. In the morning she sent for the duke. He found her pale and in tears. "Two more nights such as the last," she told him, "would bring her to the grave." She described the conflict of feeling between love and duty, in which it had been passed by her, and told him "that, although her affection for him was undiminished, she had, after an agonizing struggle, determined to sacrifice her own happiness to the welfare of her people." Anjou would have remonstrated, but Hatton, who was present, acted as spokesman for the agitated queen, and, with statesmanlike coldness, stated the objections to the marriage, in terms which proved that they were regarded by the council as insuperable.

The duke retired, in great disorder, to his own apartment, and, plucking the ring from his finger, flung it passionately on the ground, exclaiming, at the same time, "that the women of England were as changeable and capricious as their own climate, or the waves that encircled their island."

He then demanded leave to depart, but Elizabeth implored him to remain, for "that it was her intention to marry him at a more auspicious moment, but at present she was compelled to do violence to her own feelings." The credulous prince believed, and tarried three months, waiting the auspicious moment, which was destined never to arrive. Elizabeth, mean-

time, lavished the most flattering attentions upon him, and, like Calypso, omitted no device that was likely to retain this ill-favoured Telemachus spell-bound in her enchanted isle.

The States of Belgium grew impatient, meantime, of the protracted absence of their sovereign, and demanded his return. The prince himself was weary of the absurd thralldom in which he was held, and finding it impossible to bring his wary *ina-morata* to the desired point, determined to be kept no longer as the puppet of her wayward will. He announced to her the day of his departure—she remonstrated; he explained the necessity of his return to his new subjects. She called them “villains,” and would only consent to his departure on condition of his promising to return in a month, and insisted, in spite of his avowed reluctance, on accompanying him part of his journey to the coast. If we may judge from outward signs and tokens, the struggle was really severe between duty and passion in the bosom of the queen. During Anjou’s journey to Sandwich, she sent repeated messages of inquiry after his health, and even when he was on ship-board, Sussex brought him an urgent invitation to return to the queen, but he was obdurate. Her ministers would not permit her to sully her glory by becoming his wife. He would not permit himself to be played with any longer. Attended by the Earl of Leicester, Lord Hunsdon, Lord C. Howard, one hundred gentlemen, and an escort of three hundred men, he sailed on February 8th for Holland, promising to return to Elizabeth in March, but she never saw him again.

If we may credit the report of the gossiping heir of Shrewsbury, Elizabeth was scarcely less afflicted for the loss of Anjou than Dido for that of Æneas. She refused to return to Whitehall, because it was likely to bring too lively a remembrance to her mind of him with whom she so unwillingly parted. She might, nevertheless, have retained this precious charmer at the price of marriage, but her fame, her power, and her popularity were dearer to Elizabeth than idle dreams of love, and she was blessed with a happy degree of fickleness, which, in due time, enabled her to find a fresh and more agreeable source of amusement than cherishing the image of a lost lover.

It would not only be a painful task, but incompatible with the plan of this work, to enter into the details of the persecutions on the score of Nonconformity which stain the annals of this period of Elizabeth's life and reign. Suffice it to say that the unsparing use of the rack, the gibbet, and the quartering knife failed either to silence the zeal of the Puritans, or to deter the seminary priests from performing their perilous missions as teachers of their proscribed doctrines. The natural result of these severities was, to provoke a spirit of enmity against the queen—a spirit that animated the professors of these opposing creeds to dare the sternest inflictions of the secular power unshrinkingly for conscience' sake.*

Elizabeth had been personally interested by the learning, eloquence, and ardent loyalty of the celebrated Edmund Campian, before the possibility was imagined of that star of the University of Oxford, forsaking the reformed religion, by law established in England, for the proscribed doctrines of the Church of Rome. After he had been tortured repeatedly for the purpose of extorting from him the particulars of some secret plot against the queen, in which he was suspected of being an agent, Elizabeth determined to see and confer with Campian herself, and by her order he was secretly brought one evening from the Tower, and introduced to her, at the house of the Earl of Leicester, in the presence of that nobleman, the Earl of Bedford, and the two Secretaries of State. "She asked him if he acknowledged her for queen." He replied, "Not only for queen, but for my *lawful* queen." She demanded, "If he considered that the Pope could excommunicate her lawfully?" He replied, evasively, "that it was not for him to decide in a controversy between her majesty and the Pope. By the Pope's ordinary power he could not excommunicate princes. Whether he could by that power which he sometimes exercised in extraordinary emergencies, was a difficult and doubtful question."

Such an answer was not likely to prove satisfactory to so subtle a princess as Elizabeth, and she left him to the decision of her judges. He and twelve other Catholic priests were

* See Appendix, Note D, The Seminary Priests.

arraigned for treason, found guilty, and sentenced to the usual horrible death awarded to traitors. This occurred while the Duke of Anjou was at the Court of Elizabeth, and it was observed by some of the members of the Council that the execution of so many Catholic priests would disgust the future consort of their sovereign. Burleigh represented the necessity of the execution as a measure of expediency, to allay the apprehensions of the Protestants at that peculiar crisis. Campian, with two others, were executed, asserting their innocence of any offence against the Government, and praying, with their last breath, for Queen Elizabeth. Anjou took the matter as calmly as Gallio, "caring for none of those things." His creed was evidently similar to that of the cynical citizen of London in 1788, who sought to preserve his house from the attacks of the No-popery rabble, in the riots, led by Lord George Gordon, by chalking on his door, "NO RELIGION AT ALL."

In the same year (1583), the Czar, Ivan Basilovitch, applied to Elizabeth to negotiate a peace between him and John, King of Sweden, and was so well pleased with her good offices, that imagining she might stand his friend in a matter more interesting to his personal happiness, he made humble suit to her majesty, to send him a wife out of England. Elizabeth made choice of a young lady of royal Plantagenet descent, Anne, sister to the Earl of Huntingdon, but when she discovered that the barbarous laws of Muscovy allowed the sovereign to put away his Czarina as soon as he was tired of her, and wished for something new in the conjugal department, she excused her fair subject from accepting the proffered honour, by causing his imperial majesty to be informed "that the young lady's health was too delicate for such a change of climate, and her mother was too tenderly attached to endure the absence of her daughter; and above all, the laws of England would not permit her to give away the daughters of her subjects in marriage without the consent of her parents." The Czar was dissatisfied, and did not long survive his disappointment.

This year died Elizabeth's faithful kinsman and servant, the Earl of Sussex. He retained his contempt of his old adversary,

Leicester, to the last. "I am now passing into another world," said he, to the friends who surrounded his death-bed, "and I must leave you to your fortunes and the queen's grace and goodness, but beware of the gipsy, or he will be too hard for you all ; you know not the nature of the beast as well as I do." Leicester, however, never regained his influence with his royal mistress after his marriage with her cousin, Lettice Knollys, the widow of the Earl of Essex, though he retained his place in the Cabinet, and was, with Burleigh and Hatton, mainly instrumental in traversing her marriage with the Duke of Anjou.

Elizabeth's temper became more irritable than usual, after she was deprived of the amusement of coquetting with the princes and envoys of France over her last matrimonial treaty, and Burleigh often shed bitter tears in private, in consequence of the life she led him. At length, worn out with these vexations, and disgusted with the treatment he received from a growing party that was beginning to divide the council against him, he requested permission to withdraw from the turmoils of the Court, and end his days in retirement at Theobalds ; on which the queen, who knew his value too well to be content to part with him, wrote the following lively letter to the discontented minister :—

" Sir Spirit,

" I doubt I do nick-name you. For those of your kind (they say) have no *sense* (feeling). But I have lately seen an *ecce signum*, that if an ass kick you, you feel it too soon. I will recant you from being *spirit*, if ever I perceive that you disdain not such a feeling. Serve God, fear the king, and be a good fellow to the rest. Let never care appear in you for such a rumour, but let them well know that you desire the righting of such wrong, by making known their error, than you to be so silly a soul, as to fore slow what you ought to do, or not freely deliver what you think meetest, and pass of no man so much as not to regard her trust who putteth it in you.

" God bless you, and long may you last,

" Omnino, E. R."

Queen Elizabeth gave her half-brother, Sir John Perrot, the command of a fleet to intercept a meditated invasion of Ireland by Philip II. ; and soon after appointed him to the highest military command in that country, where, while he exercised the most despotic cruelty on the insurgents, he manifested the strongest inclination to act independently of her majesty, whose

birth he considered not a whit better than his own. The speeches he made on various occasions to this effect were carefully registered against him. It was his pleasure to suppress the Cathedral of St. Patrick; the queen forbade this proceeding, when he thus undutifully addressed the council:—"Stick not so much on the queen's letters of commandment, for she may command what she will, but we will do what we like." The queen appointed Mr. Errington Clerk of the Exchequer, on which Sir John exclaimed, "This fiddling woman troubles me out of measure. God's dear lady, he shall not have the office! I will give it to Sir Thomas Williams." This was proved by the oath of his secretary, Philip Williams, who, when he was brought to trial for disobedience and contempt of the queen, was the principal witness against him. Sir John earnestly requested his secretary might be confronted with him; but with the infamous injustice with which such trials were carried on in the sixteenth century, Popham, the queen's Attorney-General, forbade this reasonable request. One of the depositions of this man touched Elizabeth on tender ground; at the time of the Spanish invasion, Sir John by his report said, "Ah, silly woman, now she shall not curb me! now she shall not rule me! Now, God's dear lady, I shall be her white boy again;" adding, that when Sir John Garland brought him a letter from the queen, he said, with violent execrations, "This it is, to serve a base-born woman! Had I served any prince in Christendom, I had not been thus dealt withal." He was accused of treasonable communication with Spain, but nothing was proved excepting foolish speeches.

He attributed his disgrace chiefly to the malice of his old enemy, Sir Christopher Hatton, whom he despised as a carpet knight, who had danced his way into Elizabeth's good graces. When Sir John Perrot was told he must die, he exclaimed, "God's death! will my sister sacrifice her brother to his frisking adversaries?" When Elizabeth heard this truly Tudor-like remonstrance, she paused from signing his death warrant, saying, "They were all knaves that condemned him."

His furious antipathy to Sir Christopher Hatton, and his

sneers at his dancing, will remind the reader of Gray's celebrated lines—

“ My lord high-keeper led the brawls,
The seals and maces danced before him.”

Sir John Perrot was not executed, but pined himself to death, like a prisoned eagle, in confinement in the Tower.

The greatest contradiction ever offered to Queen Elizabeth proceeded from men of her own blood. One afternoon, when she was at cards, she turned to her young kinsman, Robert Carey, who stood at her elbow, and asked him when his father, Lord Hunsdon, meant to depart to his government at Berwick ? He replied, “After Whitsuntide.” This information put her majesty into a great rage. “God’s wounds !” she exclaimed, “I will set him by the feet, and send another in his place if he dallies thus.” Robert Carey replied that the delay was but to make provision. She declared that Hunsdon had been going from Christmas to Easter, and from Easter to Whitsuntide ; and if he was not off directly, she would put another in his place, and so she commanded Carey to tell him. But Hunsdon came of her own lineage, and shared her own indomitable spirit. By way of reply he told his mind very freely to Burleigh. The threat of laying him by the feet, he could not digest, and alluded to it in these high-spirited words : “ Any imprisonment she may put me to shall redound to her dishonour ; because I neither have nor will I deserve it.”

The queen’s conduct to this faithful kinsman is characteristic of her niggardliness. He had a double claim on the Earldom of Wiltshire. Elizabeth withheld it through his life, but when he was on his death-bed, she sent the robes and patent to his bed-side. Whereupon, he who could dissemble neither in life nor death, sent them back with these words, “Tell the queen that if I was unworthy these honours living, I am unworthy of them dying.”

It will be allowed that a narrative wholly devoted to the persona biography of Elizabeth can afford but a few words, as a retrospect of her regal sway over the sister island. “Ireland,” says Naunton, “cost her more vexation than anything else.

The expense of it pinched her ; the ill-success of her officers wearied her ; and in that service she grew hard to please." The barbarity with which she caused that country to be devastated is unprecedented, excepting in the extermination of the Caribs by the Spaniards.

Henry VIII. had given himself little concern with the state of religion in Ireland ; it remained virtually a Catholic country ; the monasteries and their inhabitants were not uprooted, as in England ; and the whole country incipiently acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope, through all the Tudor reigns, till Elizabeth ascended the throne. The false step taken by the Pope at Elizabeth's accession, by mooted the point of her reign *de juro*, instead of considering it *de facto*, forced her into the measure of insisting that all Ireland should renounce the Catholic religion, and become Protestant ; and this she enforced under the severest penal laws. Ireland, which had acknowledged the English monarchs as suzerains, or lords paramount over their petty kings and chiefs for several centuries, but had scarcely allowed them as kings of Ireland for a score years, now flamed out into rebellion against the English lord-deputy ; and this functionary, by the queen's orders, governed despotically, by mere orders of council ; and endeavoured to dispense with the Irish Parliament. The taxes were forthwith cessed at the will of the lord-deputy. The Earl of Desmond, the head of the Fitzgeralds, and possessed at that time of an estate of six hundred thousand acres, aided by Lord Baltinglas, head of the Eustaces, whose family had for four generations filled the office of lords-treasurer, or lords-deputy, and were ever closely allied with the Geraldines, resisted the payment of this illegal tax, and required that a Parliament might be called, as usual, to fix the demands on the subject ; for which measure, these gallant precursors of Hampden were forthwith immured in a tower of Dublin Castle. They sent messengers to Elizabeth, to complain of the conduct of her lord-deputy ; for which presumption, as she called it, she transferred them to the more alarming prison of the Tower of London. The English Parliament, however, finding their sole crime was the vindication of the existence

of a Parliament in Ireland, were inclined to view the case as bearing on their own. Elizabeth, therefore, postponed her vengeance on Desmond and Baltinglas, and ordered their liberation.

Philip of Spain then, in revenge for the assistance given by Elizabeth to his Protestant subjects in the Low Countries, proffered aid to the Irish ; the Geraldines and Eustaces flew to arms, and for many years sustained a contest with the English lord-deputy. At length the venerable Earl of Desmond, crushed by overwhelming numbers, became a fugitive, and after wandering about in glens and forests for three years, was surprised in a lonely hut by a party of his enemies. Kelly of Moriarty struck off his head, and conveyed it, as an acceptable present, to Queen Elizabeth, by whose order it was fixed on London Bridge.

The lord-deputy, Montjoy (the Irish say by the advice of Spenser, the poet), the commander of the English forces, commenced that horrid war of extermination which natives call "the hag's wars." The houses and standing corn of the wretched natives were burnt, and the cattle killed, wherever the English came, which starved the people into temporary submission. When some of the horrors of the case were represented to the queen, and she found the state to which the sister island was reduced, she was heard to exclaim, "that she found she had sent wolves, not shepherds, to govern Ireland, for they had left nothing but ashes and carcasses for her to reign over !"

This deprecatory speech did not, however, save the lives of the patriots who had resisted the extinction of the Irish Parliaments. Lord Baltinglas was beheaded, and a peculiar Act passed, called the Statute of Baltinglas, which confiscated the estates granted to the Eustaces in Ireland, although the young brother of Lord Baltinglas had taken no part in the rebellion.

The latter days of Elizabeth were certainly impoverished and embittered by the long strife in Ireland, and if her sister declared "that, when dead, Calais would be found written on her heart," Elizabeth had as much reason to affirm that the burning cares connected with the state of Ireland had wasted her lamp of life.

CHAPTER IX

Evil consequences to Elizabeth from the detention of Mary Queen of Scots—Real and pretended plots against Elizabeth's life—Her parsimony—Altercation between Elizabeth and the Archbishop of St. Andrew's and other Scotch ambassadors—Hard treatment of the Earls of Northumberland and Arundel—Her enmity to Lady Arundel—Takes offence with Leicester—Her angry speeches of him—Quarrels with Burleigh—Leicester's jealousy of Raleigh—First notice of Essex—Morgan and Babington's conspiracy—Elizabeth's peril—Queen of Scots implicated—Her removal to Fotheringay—Proceedings against Mary—Elizabeth's irritation—Petitioned by Parliament to put Mary to death—Her speech—Subsequent irresolution—She hints at a secret murder—Remonstrances of the King of France—Mary's sentence published—Her scornful treatment of the Scotch ambassadors—Crooked policy of her ministers—Excited state of her mind—Her irresolution—Scenes between her and Davison—She signs Mary's death warrant—Her jest on the subject—Her demurs—Earnest desire of Mary's assassination—Commands Davison to propose it to Paulet—Her anger at Paulet's scruples—Dark hints of employing an agent of her own—Manner in which she receives the news of Mary's execution—She rates her ministers and council—Disgrace of Davison—Queen's excuses to the French ambassador—Charges the blame on her ministers—She brings Lady Arabella Stuart into notice—Pope Sixtus V. commends her spirit, but proclaims a crusade against her.

THE unjust detention of Mary Queen of Scots in an English prison, had for fifteen years proved a source of personal misery to Elizabeth, and a perpetual incentive to crime. The worst passions of the human heart—jealousy, hatred, and revenge—were kept in a constant state of excitement by the confederacies that were formed in her dominions in behalf of the captive heiress of the crown. Her ministers pursued a systematic course of espionage and treachery, in order to discover the friends of the unfortunate Mary; and when discovered, omitted no means, however base, by which they might be brought under the penalty of treason. The sacrifice of human life was

appalling ; the violation of all moral and divine restrictions of conscience more melancholy still. Scaffolds streamed with blood ; the pestilential gaols were crowded with victims, the greater portion of whom died of fever or famine, unpitied and unrecorded, save in the annals of private families.

But while plots, real and pretended, threatening the life of the queen, agitated the public mind from day to day, it had become customary for groups of the populace to throw themselves on their knees in the dirt by the wayside, whenever she rode out, and pray for her preservation, invoking blessings on her head, and confusion to the Papists, with the utmost power of their voices. A scene of this kind once interrupted an important political dialogue the maiden queen held with the ambassador Mauvissière, as he rode by her side, from Hampton Court to London, in November, 1583. She was in the act of discussing the plots of the Jesuits, "when," says Mauvissière, "just at this moment many people, in large companies, met her by the way, and kneeling on the ground with divers sorts of prayers, wished her a thousand blessings, and that the evil-disposed who meant to harm her might be discovered, and punished as they deserved. She frequently stopped to thank them for the affection they manifested for her. She and I being alone, amidst her retinue, mounted on goodly horses, she observed to me 'that she saw clearly that she was not disliked by all.' "

It is not very difficult to perceive, by the dry manner of Mauvissière, that he deemed this scene was got up for the purpose. Indeed, such public displays of fervency are by no means in unison with the English national character.

The parsimony of Elizabeth in all affairs of State policy, where a certain expenditure was required, often embarrassed her ministers, and traversed the arrangements they had made, or were desirous of making, in her name with foreign princes. Walsingham was, on one occasion, so greatly annoyed by her majesty's teasing minuteness and provoking interference in regard to money matters, that he took the liberty of penning a long remonstrance to her, amounting to an absolute lecture on the subject. There is no date of place or year to this very curious letter ;

but the allusions render it apparent that it was written in France, just after the attempt made by Elizabeth and her council at home to curtail the allowance of fifty-two pounds per week, which had been, in the first instance, granted to the Earl of Shrewsbury, for the board and maintenance of the captive Queen of Scots and her household, to thirty. Even this stinted sum was sorely grudged by Elizabeth. The earl complained of being a great loser, and pinched the table of his luckless charge in so niggardly a fashion, that a serious complaint was made to Queen Elizabeth, by the French ambassador, of the badness and meanness of the diet provided for Mary. Elizabeth wrote a severe reprimand to Shrewsbury; and he, who was rendered by the jealousy of his wife the most miserable of men, petitioned to be released from the odious office that had been thrust upon him, of jailer to the fair, ill-fated Scottish queen. After a long delay, his resignation was accepted; but he had to give up his gloomy castle of Tutbury, for a prison for Mary, no other house in England, it was presumed, being so thoroughly distasteful to the royal captive as an abiding-place.

The arrest and execution of Morton, in Scotland, was peculiarly displeasing to Elizabeth and embarrassing to her council. Walsingham boldly reproaches his royal mistress with having lost this valuable political tool, by not having offered a sufficient bribe for the preservation of his life. Mauvissière, in a letter to his own Court, gives an amusing detail of an altercation which was carried on between Elizabeth and the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, on account of the execution of Morton, in which she vituperated the Queen of Scots and the young King James and in the midst of her choler exclaimed:—

“I am more afraid of making a fault in my Latin, than of the Kings of Spain, France, and Scotland, the whole house of Guise, and their confederates.”

Elizabeth stood on no ceremony with the envoys of Scotland, who scrupled to sell their fealty for English gold. In the previous year, when James had despatched his favourite minister, the Duke of Lennox, with a letter and message to her, explanatory of the late events in Scotland, she at first refused to see

him, and when she was, at last, induced to grant him an interview, she, according to the phrase of Calderwood, the historian of the Kirk, "rattled him up" on the subject of his political conduct, but he replied with so much mildness and politeness, that her wrath was subdued, and she parted from him courteously.

The revolution by which Lennox and his colleague Stuart, Earl of Arran, had emancipated their youthful sovereign from the degrading tutelage in which he had been kept, by his father's murderers and his mother's foes, had also broken Elizabeth's ascendancy in the Scottish Court. A counter-influence, even that of the captive Mary Stuart, was just then predominant there. Davison, Elizabeth's ambassador to Scotland, assured Walsingham that the Scottish queen, from the guarded recesses of her prison, guided both king and nobles as she pleased.

The young king was now marriageable, and his mother's intense desire for him to marry with a princess of Spain was well known. If such an alliance were once accomplished, it might be suspected that the English Catholics, assured of aid both from Scotland and Spain, would no longer endure the severity of penal laws, and the injustice to which they were subjected by a queen, whose doubtful legitimacy might afford a convenient pretext to the malcontent party for her deposition. The Jesuits, undismayed by tortures and death, arrayed their talents, their courage, and subtlety against Elizabeth with quiet determination, and plots, and rumours of plots, against her life and Government, thickened round her. The details of these would require a folio volume. The most important in its effects was that in which the two Throckmortons, Francis and George, were implicated, with Charles Paget, in a correspondence with Morgan, an exiled Catholic, employed in the Queen of Scots' service abroad. Francis Throckmorton endured the rack thrice with unflinching constancy ; but when, with bruised and distorted limbs, he was led for a fourth examination to that terrible machine, he was observed to tremble. The nervous system had been wholly disarranged, and, in the weakness of exhausted nature, he made admissions which appeared to implicate Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, as the author of a plot for dethron-

ing Queen Elizabeth. Mendoça indignantly denied the charge, when called upon to answer it, before the privy council, and retorted upon Burleigh the injury that had been done to his sovereign, by the detention of the treasure in the Geonose vessels. He was, however, ordered to quit England without delay. Lord Paget and Charles Arundel fled to France, where they set forth a statement that they had retired beyond seas, not from a consciousness of guilt, but to avoid the effects of Leicester's malice. Lord Paget was brother to one of the persons accused.

Throckmorton retracted on the scaffold all that had been wrung from his reluctant lips by the terrors of the rack.

The capture of Creighton, the Scotch Jesuit, and the seizure of his papers, which he had vainly endeavoured to destroy, by throwing them into the sea, when he found the vessel in which he had taken his passage pursued by the queen's ships, brought to light an important mass of evidence connected with the projected invasion of England, and Elizabeth perceived that a third of her subjects were ready to raise the standard of revolt in the name of Mary Stuart. At this momentous crisis, the treachery of the King of Scotland's mercenary envoy, Arthur Gray, by putting Elizabeth in possession of the secrets of his own Court and the plans of the captive queen, enabled her to countermine the operations of her foes. She out-manœuvred King James, and, as usual, bribed his Cabinet ; she first duped, and then crushed Mary, and laid the rod of her vengeance with such unsparing severity on her Catholic subjects, that the more timorous fled, as the reformers had done in the reign of her sister, to seek liberty of conscience, as impoverished exiles, in foreign lands.

It was not, however, every one who was so fortunate as to escape. Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, brother to the unfortunate Earl Thomas, who had been beheaded for his share in the northern rebellion, was sent to the Tower, on pretext of having implicated himself in the Throckmorton plot, Shelly, an acquaintance of his, having admitted something to this effect, in a confession extorted by the rack. After having been detained more than a year in close confinement, without being brought

to trial, the earl was found one morning dead in his bed, with three slugs lodged in his heart. His keeper had been superseded, the night before, by a servant of Sir Christopher Hatton ; therefore suspicions were entertained that he had been murdered, but the jury brought in a verdict of *felo-de-se*, it having been deposed that he had been heard to swear, with an awful oath, "that the queen," whom he irreverently designated by a name only proper to a female of the canine race, "should not have his estates ;" and therefore, to avert the consequences which would result from an Act of attainder being passed upon him, he had obtained a pistol through the intervention of a friend, and shot himself in his bed.

A more lingering tragedy was the doom of Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, the eldest son of the beheaded Duke of Norfolk. This young nobleman had been educated in the Protestant faith, and was married, in his fifteenth year, to one of the co-heiresses of the ancient family of Dacre. Her, he at first neglected, intoxicated, as it appears, by the seductive pleasures of the Court, and the flattering attentions which the queen lavished upon him. It had even been whispered among the courtiers, "that if he had not been a married man, he might have aspired to the hand of his sovereign." Meantime, his deserted wife, in the seclusion of the country, became a convert to the doctrines of the Church of Rome, probably through the persuasions of her husband's grandfather, Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, as her change of creed took place during his life. On the death of that nobleman, Philip Howard claimed to succeed him in his honours and estates. His claims were admitted, and he took his place in the House of Lords, as Earl of Arundel and premier peer of England ; for there were then no dukes, his father having been the last man who bore that dignity in Elizabeth's reign.

The malignant influences that had destroyed Norfolk pursued his son. They were, in fact, similar characters, possessing many amiable qualities, but devoid of moral courage and manly decision. The prophetic malediction, which was denounced against Reuben—"unstable as water, thou shalt not excel"—

appears peculiarly applicable to both these unfortunate Howards. They were of a temperament too soft and timid for the times ; and the very excess of caution which they exercised, to avoid committing themselves, either personally or politically, was the cause of exciting a greater degree of suspicion in the mind of their wary and observant sovereign, than would probably have been the result of a more manly line of conduct.

Norfolk had been the dupe and the victim of men who had taken advantage of his vacillating disposition to beguile him into overt acts of treason, and then hunted him to the scaffold. Arundel, with naturally virtuous and refined inclinations, had been led, by the contagious influence of evil companions, into a career of sinful folly, which impaired his fortune, deprived him of the respect of his friends, and excited the contempt of his enemies. The repeated slights that were put upon him, rendered him at length aware of the light in which he was regarded in that false flattering Court ; and in the mingled bitterness of self-reproach and resentment, he retired to Arundel Castle. There he became, for the first time, sensible of the virtues and endearing qualities of his neglected wife, and endeavoured, by every mark of tender attention, to atone for his past faults.

The queen took umbrage at Arundel's withdrawing from Court. Notwithstanding the caresses she had lavished upon him, she regarded him with distrust as the son of the beheaded Norfolk. Yet Elizabeth amused herself with coquetting with the disinherited heir, till his reconciliation with his deserted countess provoked her into unequivocal manifestations of hostility, and confirmed the general remark, that "no married man could hope to retain her favour if he lived on terms of affection with his wife." The first indications of her displeasure fell on the weaker vessel. Lady Arundel was presented for recusancy, and confined under the royal warrant to the house of Sir Thomas Shirley for twelve months.

Arundel was deeply offended at the persecution of his lady, and the deprivation of her society, of which he had learned the value too late. He was himself, in heart, a convert to the same faith which she openly professed ; and being much importuned

by the friends of the Queen of Scots to enter into the various confederacies formed in her favour, he determined to avoid further danger, by quitting England. His secretary, Mumford, had already engaged a passage for him, in a vessel that was to sail from Hull, when he was informed that it was her majesty's intention to honour him with a visit at Arundel House. Elizabeth came, was magnificently entertained, behaved graciously, and carried her dissimulation so far as to speak in terms of commendation of her host to the French ambassador, Mauvissière de Castelnau, who was present.

"She praised the Earl of Arundel much for his good-nature," says that statesman ; but when she took her leave of him, she thanked him for his hospitality, and in return, bade him, "consider himself a prisoner in his own house." Arundel, after this, attempted once more to leave England, and had actually embarked and set sail from the coast of Sussex. The vessel was chased at sea by two of the queen's ships ; he was taken, brought back, and lodged in the Tower. His confinement was rigorous in the extreme, and embittered with every circumstance of aggravation that persons of narrow minds, but great malignity, could devise. He remained unnoticed in prison for upwards of a twelvemonth, and was then fined ten thousand pounds by a Star Chamber sentence, for having attempted to quit the realm without leave. He was also condemned to suffer imprisonment during her majesty's pleasure. Nothing less than a life-long term of misery satisfied the vengeance of Elizabeth.

While these severities were exercised on the devoted representative of the once powerful house of Norfolk, the famous association for the protection of Queen Elizabeth against "Popish conspirators" was devised by Leicester. All who subscribed it bound themselves to prosecute to the death, or as far as they were able, all who should attempt anything against the queen. Elizabeth, who was naturally much gratified at the enthusiasm with which the majority of her subjects hastened to enrol themselves as her voluntary protectors, imagined that the Queen of Scots would be proportionately mortified and depressed at an institution which proved how little she had to hope from the

disaffection of Englishmen to their reigning sovereign. "Her majesty," writes Walsingham to Sadler, "could well like that this association were shown to the queen, your charge, upon some apt occasion ; and that there were good regard had both unto her, her countenance, and speech, after the perusing thereof."

Mary Stuart disappointed the prying malignity of the parties by whom she was exposed to this inquisitorial test, by her frank and generous approval of the association, and astonished them by offering to subscribe it herself. The new Parliament, which had been summoned of necessity, the last having been dissolved after the unprecedented duration of eleven years, converted the bond of this association into a statute, which provided,

"That any person, by or for whom rebellion should be excited, or the queen's life attacked, might be tried by commission under the Great Seal, and adjudged to capital punishment. And if the queen's life should be taken away, then any person, by or for whom such act was committed, should be capitally punished, and the issue of such person cut off from the succession to the crown."

"It is unnecessary," observes that great civilian, Sir James Mackintosh, with reference to this Act, "to point out the monstrous hardship of making the Queen of Scots, a prisoner in the hands of Elizabeth, responsible for acts done for her, or in her name." Such, however, was the object of the statute, which was intended to prepare the way for the judicial murder of the heiress-presumptive to the throne, and also for the exclusion of her son from the succession. This clause, Sir James Mackintosh affirms, was ascribed to Leicester, who had views for himself, or his brother-in-law, Huntingdon, the representative of the house of Clarence.

Elizabeth was, at this juncture, on terms of conventional civility with Henry III. of France. Henry, however, continued to advocate the cause of his unfortunate sister-in-law, Mary Stuart ; and his ambassadors made perpetual intercessions in her favour to Elizabeth, who generally received these representations with a stormy burst of anger and dislain. Henry was too much paralyzed by internal commotions and foreign foes to resent the contempt with which his remonstrances were treated

by his haughty neighbour ; far less was he able to contend with her for the dominion of the Low Countries. Elizabeth possessed the power, but prudently declined the name of sovereign of those States, though the deputies on their knees again offered her that title after the death of the Duke of Anjou. She sent, however, a considerable military force to their aid, under the command of her quondam favourite, the Earl of Leicester. If we may credit the private letters of the French ambassador, Mauvissière, to Mary Queen of Scots, this appointment was intended by Elizabeth, and the predominant party in her Cabinet, as a sort of honourable banishment for Leicester, whom they were all desirous of getting out of the way. According to the same authority, Christopher Blount, though a Catholic, was sent out by the queen as a spy on Leicester. Leicester was received with signal honours by the States, but instead of conducting himself with the moderation which his difficult position required, he assumed the airs of regality, and sent for his countess, with intent to hold a Court that should rival that of England in splendour. Mauvissière, in one of his intercepted confidential communications to the captive Queen of Scots, observes, "The Earl of Leicester takes great authority in Flanders, not without exciting the jealousy of the queen. She will neither allow him supplies of money, nor permit his wife to come out to him."

"I will let the upstart know," exclaimed the last and proudest of the Tudor sovereigns, in the first fierce explosion of her jealousy and disdain, "how easily the hand which has exalted him can beat him down to the dust." Under the impetus of these feelings, she penned a scornful letter, which she despatched to him by her vice-chamberlain, who was also charged with a verbal rating on the subject of his offences.

She also wrote to the States, "that, as to their disgrace, and without her knowledge, they had conferred the absolute government of the confederate States upon Leicester, her subject, though she had refused it herself, she now required them to eject Leicester from the office they had unadvisedly conferred upon him." The States returned a submissive answer, and

Leicester expressed the deepest contrition for having been so unfortunate as to incur her displeasure.

At first, she preserved great show of resentment, threatened to recall and punish him, and rated Burleigh for endeavouring to excuse him. Burleigh, on this, tendered his resignation; Elizabeth called him "a presumptuous fellow;" but the next morning her choler abated. She had vented her displeasure in empty words, and her council induced her to sanction the measure of sending supplies of men and money to Leicester.

Soon after this reconciliation was effected, Elizabeth began to speak of Leicester in her wonted terms of partial regard; so much so, that even his hated rival, Sir Walter Raleigh, in a postscript to a courteous letter, addressed by him to the absent favourite, says, "The queen is in very good terms with you, and, thanks be to God, well pacified, and you are again her sweet Robin."

Bitterly jealous, however, was "sweet Robin" of the graceful and adroit young courtier whom he suspected of having superseded him in the favour of his royal mistress, by whom, indeed, Raleigh appears at that time to have been very partially regarded. Wit, genius, and valour in him were united with a fine person, and a certain degree of audacity, which qualified him admirably to make his way with a princess of Elizabeth's temper. So considerable was his influence with his partial sovereign at one period, that Tarleton, the comedian, who had probably received his cue from Burleigh or his son-in-law, Oxford, ventured, during the performance of his part in a play, which he was acting before her majesty, to point at the reigning favourite while pronouncing these words, "See, the knave commands the queen!" for which he was corrected by a frown from her majesty.* If Raleigh could have been contented to remain a bachelor, he would probably have superseded all the rival candidates for the smiles of his royal mistress.

The first possession acquired by England in the new world was discovered by Sir Walter Raleigh, and in compliment to Queen Elizabeth, named Virginia. It was from this coast that he first introduced tobacco into England.

* See Appendix, Note E.

So varied and so brilliant were the talents of Raleigh, as soldier, seaman, statesman, poet, philosopher, and wit, that it would have been wonderful if a woman so peculiarly susceptible as Elizabeth had not felt the power of his fascinations. It was to Raleigh's patronage that Spenser was indebted for an introduction to Queen Elizabeth; and Spenser never omitted an opportunity of offering the poetic incense of his gracefully turned compliments to his royal mistress.

The young and accomplished Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, is supposed to have been first introduced to the notice of Queen Elizabeth by his step-father, Leicester, in the hope of diverting her majesty's regard from her new favourite Raleigh, whose influence was regarded with a jealous eye by her ministers. As Essex was the great-grandson of Anne Boleyn's sister Mary and William Carey, he was nearly related to Queen Elizabeth, who distinguished him in the first instance rather as a youthful pet and kinsman than a lover. The young earl, however, quickly assumed the haughty and jealous airs of a person who considered that he had a right to distance all other pretenders to the royal favour.

The course of chronology now brings us to the darkest and most painful epoch of the maiden reign, the death of Elizabeth's hapless kinswoman, Mary Queen of Scots.

The implacable junta by whom Elizabeth's resolves were at times influenced, and her better feelings smothered, had sinned too deeply against Mary Stuart to risk the possibility of her surviving her royal mistress. Elizabeth shrank from either incurring the odium, or establishing the dangerous precedent, of bringing a sovereign princess to the block. The queens whose blood had been shed on the scaffold by her ruthless father, were subjects of his own, puppets whom he had raised, and then degraded from the fatal dignity which his own caprice had bestowed upon them; but even he, tyrant as he was, had not ventured to slay either of his royally born consorts, Katharine of Arragon or Anne of Cleves, though claiming the two-fold authority of husband and sovereign over both.

Mary Stuart was not only a king's daughter, but a crowned

and anointed sovereign; and under no pretence could she legally be rendered amenable to Elizabeth's authority. Every species of quiet cruelty that might tend to sap the life of a delicately organised and sensitive female, had been systematically practised on the royal captive by the leaders of Elizabeth's Cabinet. Mary had been confined in damp, dilapidated apartments, exposed to malaria, deprived of exercise and recreation, and compelled, occasionally, by way of variety, to rise from a sick bed, and travel through an inclement country, from one prison to another, in the depth of winter. These atrocities had entailed upon her a complication of chronic maladies of the most agonising description, but she continued to exist, and it was evident that the vital principle in her constitution was sufficiently tenacious to enable her to endure many years of suffering. The contingencies of a day, an hour, meantime, might lay Elizabeth in the dust, and call Mary Stuart to the seat of empire. Could Burleigh, Walsingham, and Leicester expect, in that event, to escape the vengeance which their injurious treatment had provoked from that princess?

From the moment that Elizabeth had declared that "honour and conscience both forbade her to put Mary to death," it had been the great business of these determined foes of Mary to convince her that it was incompatible with her own safety to permit her to live. Assertions to this effect were lightly regarded by Elizabeth, but the evidence of a series of conspiracies, real as well as feigned, began to take effect upon her mind, and slowly, but surely, brought her to the same conclusion.

For many years it had been the practice of Walsingham to employ spies, not only for the purpose of watching the movements of those who were suspected of attachment to the Scottish queen, but to inveigle them into plots against the Government and person of Queen Elizabeth.

The zeal and self-devotion of Mary's misjudging friends were the very means used by her foes to effect her destruction. Morgan, her agent in France, was a fierce, wrong-headed Welshman, who had persuaded himself, and some others, that it was not only expedient but justifiable to destroy Elizabeth, as the sole means of

rescuing his long-suffering mistress from the living death in which she was slowly pining away ; and his plotting brain was employed in the organisation of a more daring design against the life of Queen Elizabeth than any that had yet been devised. Mary's faithful ambassador at Paris, Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, and her kinsmen of the House of Guise, decidedly objected to the project.

Morgan, however, intent on schemes of vengeance, paid no heed to the remonstrances of Mary's tried and faithful counsellors, but took into his confidence two of Walsingham's most artful spies, in the disguise of Catholic priests—Gifford and Greatly by name—whom he recommended to the deluded Mary, as well as Poley and Maude, two other of the agents of that statesman. Easy enough would it have been for Walsingham, who had perfect information of the proceedings of the conspirators from the first, to have crushed the plot in its infancy ; but it was his occult policy to nurse it till it became organised into a shape sufficiently formidable to Elizabeth, to bring her to the conclusion, that her life would never be safe while the Scottish queen was in existence, and, above all, to furnish a plausible pretext for the execution of Mary.

The principal leaders of the conspiracy were Ballard, a Catholic priest, and Savage, a soldier of fortune, who undertook to assassinate Queen Elizabeth with his own hand. These unprincipled desperadoes, aided by their treacherous colleagues, succeeded in beguiling Anthony Babington, of Dethick, a young gentleman of wealth and ancient lineage in Derbyshire, into the confederacy. Babington, who was a person of enthusiastic temperament, was warmly attached to the cause of Mary, for whom he had formerly performed the perilous service of transmitting letters during her imprisonment at Sheffield. At first, he objected to any attempt against his own sovereign ; but the sophistry of Ballard, and the persuasions of the treacherous agents of Walsingham, not only prevailed over his scruples, but induced him to go the whole length of the plot, even to the proposed murder. This deed, he protested, ought not to be entrusted to the single arm of Savage, and proposed that six gentlemen should

be associated for that purpose. How a man of a naturally generous and chivalric disposition could devise so cowardly a combination against the person of a female, appears almost incredible ; but such was the blind excitement of party feeling, and religious zeal, that he recklessly pressed onward to the accomplishment of his object, without even pausing to consider the turpitude of its design, much less its absurdity.

Elizabeth, notwithstanding her intrepid deportment, liked not the predicament in which she stood, with an associated band of desperadoes at large, who had pledged themselves to take her life, and she was urgent for the apprehension of Ballard and Babington. Her wily ministers had, however, higher game to bring down than a few fanatic Catholics. Walsingham had not wasted money and time, and woven his web with such determined subtlety, for the destruction of private individuals ; his object was to entangle the Queen of Scots into actual participation in a plot against Elizabeth's life and Government. This had not yet been done, and he, with difficulty, prevailed on his royal mistress to allow matters to proceed for a few days longer. Elizabeth was, indeed, rather overborne, than persuaded, by her Cabinet on this occasion. Her feminine fears had been excited, and she said, "it was her duty to put an end to the evil designs of her enemies, while it was in her power to do so, lest, by not doing it, she should seem to tempt God's mercy, rather than manifest her trust in His protection." There was sound sense in this remark, and if her council had believed in the reality of her danger, they would have been without excuse, had they ventured to trifle with the safety of their sovereign for a single day.

At length, Mary was induced to write to the French and Spanish ambassadors, urging them to obtain from their respective Courts the assistance of men and money, to be employed in her deliverance. Her letters were intercepted, opened, and copied. The same day, letters to the Spanish ambassador, Lord Paget, his brother Charles, the Archbishop of Glasgow, and Sir Francis Inglefield were intercepted.

The game was now considered, by Walsingham, sufficiently advanced for him to make a decided move, and he gave orders for

the arrest of Ballard. Warrants were also issued for Babington's apprehension, and very exaggerated accounts of the plot were published by Walsingham, stating "that a conspiracy to burn the city of London and murder the queen had been providentially discovered—that the combined forces of France and Spain had put to sea to invade England—that it was supposed they would effect a landing on the southern coast, and that all the Papists were preparing to take up arms to join them." Such was the popular excitement at these frightful rumours that all foreigners and Catholics were in the greatest peril, and the ambassadors themselves were insulted and menaced in their own houses. When Babington and several of the conspirators were captured, and brought, under a strong guard, to the Tower, the most vehement satisfaction was expressed by the people, who followed them with shouts, singing psalms, and every demonstration of joy at the escape of the queen from their treasonable designs. The bells rang, bonfires were kindled, and every one appeared inspired with the most ardent loyalty towards their sovereign.

On September 13th, 1586, seven out of the fourteen conspirators were arraigned. They confessed their crime, and the fourteen deluded culprits were sentenced to expiate their guilt by undergoing the dreadful penalty decreed by the law to traitors. Elizabeth was so greatly exasperated against them that she intimated to her council the expediency of adopting "some new device," whereby their sufferings might be rendered more acute and more calculated to strike terror into the spectators. Burleigh, with business-like coolness, explained to her majesty "that the punishment prescribed by the letter of the law was to the full as terrible as anything new that could be devised, if the executioner took care to protract the extremity of their pains in the sight of the multitude."

Immediately after the apprehension of Babington and his associates, Mary had been removed unexpectedly from Chartley to Tixal, and her papers and money seized during her absence.

The great point for which Burleigh, Leicester, Walsingham, and their colleagues had been labouring for the last eighteen years was at length accomplished. They had succeeded in

persuading Elizabeth that Mary Stuart, in her sternly guarded prison, crippled with chronic and neuralgic maladies, surrounded by spies, and out of the reach of human aid, was so formidable to her person and Government that it was an imperative duty to herself and her Protestant subjects to put her to death. Having once brought their long irresolute mistress to this conclusion, all other difficulties became matters of minor importance to the master spirits who ruled Elizabeth's council, since they had only to arrange a ceremonial process for taking away the life of their defenceless captive in as plausible and formal a manner as might be compatible with the circumstances of the case.

After much deliberation, it was determined that Mary should be tried by a commission of peers and privy councillors under the Great Seal, the fatal innovations which Henry VIII.'s despotic tyranny had made in the ancient laws of England on life and death having rendered the Crown arbitrary on these points.

The commissioners for the trial of Mary Queen of Scots left London for Fotheringay Castle before October 8th, 1586. It was not till the 11th that they assembled at Fotheringay for the business on which they had been deputed. On the 12th they opened their Court. Mary refused to acknowledge their authority, on which they delivered to her the following letter from their royal mistress :

QUEEN ELIZABETH TO MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

"You have, in various ways and manners, attempted to take my life, and to bring my kingdom to destruction by bloodshed. I have never proceeded so harshly against you, but have, on the contrary, protected and maintained you like myself. These treasons will be proved to you and all made manifest.

"Yet it is my will that you answer the nobles and peers of the kingdom as if I were myself present. I therefore require, charge, and command, that you make answer, for I have been well informed of your arrogance.

"Act plainly, without reserve, and you will sooner be able to obtain favour of me.

"ELIZABETH."

This letter was addressed to Mary (without the superscription of cousin or sister), and as it may be supposed, from the well-known high spirit of that queen, had not the slightest effect

in inducing her to reply to the commissioners. She told them, however, "that she had endeavoured to gain her liberty, and would continue to do so as long as she lived ; but that she had never plotted against the life of their queen, nor had any connexion with Babington or the others, but to obtain her freedom ; on which particulars, if Elizabeth chose to question her in person, she would declare the truth, but would reply to no inferior." There was no little sagacity shown in this appeal of Mary to the inquisitiveness that formed a leading trait of Elizabeth's character.

The details of this celebrated process, for trial it cannot be called, belong to the personal history of Mary Stuart, rather than to the biography of Elizabeth. Suffice it, therefore, to say that, after two days' fruitless struggle to defend herself against the subtlety and oppression of men who demeaned themselves like adverse lawyers pleading on the side of the Crown rather than as conscientious judges, Mary demanded to be heard before the assembled Parliament of England, or the queen and her council. The commissioners then adjourned the court, to meet, October 25th, at the Star Chamber, Westminster. On that day they reassembled, and pronounced sentence of death on the Scottish queen, pursuant to the Statute of the 27th of Elizabeth, which had been framed for that very purpose.

The Parliament met on the 29th, and, having considered the reports of the commissioners, united in petitioning Queen Elizabeth that the sentence against the Scottish queen might be carried into execution. Elizabeth received the deputation from Parliament, November 12th, in her presence-chamber at Richmond Palace. Mr. Sergeant Puckering, the Speaker, after enlarging on the offences of Mary against Queen Elizabeth, recalled to her majesty the example of God's displeasure on Saul for sparing Agag, and on Ahab for preserving Benhadad ; and, after preaching a political sermon, too tedious for recapitulation, from these irrelevant cases, he assured her "that her compliance with the petition would be most acceptable to God, and that her people expected nothing less of her." Elizabeth made an elaborate and mystified harangue, in reply, of great length

and verbosity, concluding her speech by informing them "that she had just received information of another plot, in which the conspirators had bound themselves, under the penalty of death, to take away her life within the month," thus exciting a more deadly flame of loyal indignation in their bosoms against the powerless object of their fury, who was pointed at as the inciter of all attempts against the person of Elizabeth.

The Parliament responded, in the tone that was desired, with a more ardent requisition for the blood of Mary. Elizabeth faltered, not from womanly feelings of tenderness and compassion towards the defenceless object of their fury, but from certain doubts and misgivings within her own mind, which produced one of her characteristic fits of irresolution. Her mind was tempest-tossed between her desire of Mary's death and her reluctance to stand forth to the world as her acknowledged executioner. She would have the deed performed "some other way." The personal influence of Leicester with the sovereign appears to have been required for the consummation of the tragedy. He was remanded home in November, and seems to have taken an active part in preventing Elizabeth from swerving from the point to which her ministers had brought her.

On November 22nd Lord Buckhurst and Sir Robert Beale proceeded, in pursuance of the Orders in Council and her majesty's commands, to Fotheringay Castle, to announce to the Queen of Scots that sentence of death had been pronounced against her by the commissioners, and ratified by the Parliament of England.

Meantime, the French ambassador, L'Aubespine Chateauneuf, having written in great alarm to Henry III. that the Queen of England was proceeding, he feared, to extremities with the Queen of Scots, and urged him to interfere for her preservation, that monarch despatched M. de Pomponne de Bellievre, as an ambassador-extraordinary, for the purpose of remonstrating with Elizabeth against the outrage she was preparing to commit, and using every species of intercession for the preservation of Mary's life. The young King of Scotland also addressed a letter of earnest and indignant remonstrance to Elizabeth on the

subject of his unfortunate mother, and directed Sir William Keith, his ambassador, to unite with the French ambassador in all the efforts he made for averting the doom that was now impending over her. Elizabeth long delayed an audience to Keith, and when she did admit him to her presence, she behaved with her wonted duplicity. "I swear by the living God," said she, "that I would give one of my own arms to be cut off so that any means could be found for us both to live in assurance." In another interview she declared "that no human power should ever persuade her to sign the warrant for Mary's execution." When, however, James was informed that the sentence against his mother had been published, he wrote a letter expressed in menacing and passionate terms. Elizabeth broke into a storm of fury when Keith delivered his remonstrances, and was with difficulty prevented from driving him from her presence. Leicester, it appears, interposed, and at last succeeded in pacifying her, and inducing her, on the following day, to dictate a more moderate reply. Unfortunately, James also abated his lofty tone, and wrote an apology to his royal godmother. From that moment Elizabeth knew that the game was in her own hands, and bore herself with surpassing insolence to the Scotch envoys who were sent to expostulate with her by James.

The idea of ridding herself of her royal prisoner by a private murder, the usual fate of captive princes, appears to have taken a powerful hold of Elizabeth's mind during the last eight days of Mary's life. In fact, the official statements of Mr. Secretary Davison afford positive proof that she had provided herself with agents, one of whom, Wingfield, she named, who were ready," she said, "to undertake the deed." The "niceness" of those "precise fellows," Paulet and Drury, who had the custody of Mary's person, frustrated Elizabeth's project; they were too scrupulous or too cautious to become accomplices in the murder of their hapless charge in any other way than by assisting at her execution, authorised by the queen's own warrant, under the royal seal. They were aware of the guerdon generally assigned to those who lend themselves to perform the unprofitable works of darkness for their betters. History had not told the tale of

Gournay and Maltravers and other tools of royal villainy in vain to the shrewd castellans of Fotheringay Castle, and the subsequent treatment of Davison demonstrated their wisdom in refusing to implicate themselves in an iniquity so full of peril to inferior agents.

The particulars of this foul passage in the personal annals of the maiden queen shall be related by Davison himself :

“ After that the sentence against the Scottish queen was passed and subscribed by the Lords and others, the commissioners appointed to her trial, and that her majesty had notified the same to the world by her proclamation, according to the statute, there remained nothing but her warrant, under the Great Seal of England, for the performing and accomplishing her execution, which, after some instance, as well of the Lords and Commons of the whole Parliament then assembled as of others of her council and best affected subjects, it pleased her majesty at length to yield thereunto ; and thereupon gave order to my Lord Treasurer to project the same, which he accordingly performed, and with her majesty's privity, left in my hands, to procure her signature ; but by reason of the presence of the French and Scotch ambassadors, then suitors for her (Mary's) life, she (Queen Elizabeth) forebore the signing thereof till February, which was some few days after their departure home. At what time her majesty, after some conference with the lord admiral, of the great danger she constantly lived in, and moved by his lordship to have more regard to the surety of herself and State than she seemed to take, resolved to defer the said execution no longer, and gave orders to his lordship to send for me, to bring the warrant unto her to be signed, which he forthwith did by a messenger of the chamber, who found me in the park, whither I had newly gone to take the air ; whereupon, returning back immediately with him, I went directly up to the privy chamber, where his lordship, attending my coming, discoursed unto me what speech had passed that morning betwixt her majesty and him, touching the justice against the said Scottish queen, and finally told me, ‘ how she was now fully resolved to proceed to the accomplishment thereof, and had commanded him to send

expressly for me, to bring the warrant unto her to be signed, that it might be forthwith despatched, and deferred no longer.' According to which direction, I went immediately to my chamber to fetch the said warrant and other things touching her service, and, returning up again, I sent in Mrs. Brooke to signify my being there to her majesty, who presently called for me.

"At my coming in, her highness first demanded of me, 'Whether I had been abroad that fair morning?' advising me 'to use it oftener,' and reprehending me 'for the neglect thereof,' with other like gracious speeches, arguing care of my health, and finally asked me, 'What I had in my hands?' I answered, 'Divers things to be signed that concerned her service.' She inquired, 'Whether my lord admiral had not given me order to bring up the warrant for the Scottish queen's execution?' I answered 'Yes;' and thereupon asking me for it, I delivered it into her hands. After the reading whereof, she, calling for pen and ink, signed it, and, laying it from her on the mats, demanded of me, 'Whether I were not heartily sorry to see it done?' My answer was, 'that I was so far from taking pleasure in the calamity or fall of any, or, otherwise, from thirsting in any sort after the blood of this unhappy lady in particular, as I could not but be heartily grieved to think that one of her place and quality, and otherwise so near unto her majesty, should give so great cause as she had done to take this resolution; but seeing the life of that queen threatened her majesty's death, and therefore this act of hers, in all men's opinions, was of that justice and necessity that she could not defer it without the manifest wrong and danger of herself and the whole realm, I could not be sorry to see her take an honourable and just course of securing the one and the other, as he that preferred the death of the guilty before the innocent;' which answer her highness approving with a smiling countenance, passed from the matter to ask me, 'What else I had to sign?' and thereupon offering unto her some other warrants and instructions touching her service, it pleased her, with the best disposition and willingness that might be, to sign and despatch them all.

"After this, she commanded me to carry it to the seal, and to

give my Lord Chancellor special order to use it as secretly as might be, lest the divulging thereof before the execution might, as she pretended, increase her danger ; and in my way to my Lord Chancellor, her pleasure also was, that I should visit Mr. Secretary Walsingham, being then sick at his house in London, and communicate the matter to him, 'because the grief thereof would go near,' as she merrily said, 'to kill him outright ;' then taking occasion to repeat unto me some reasons why she had deferred the matter so long, as, namely, 'for her honour's sake, that the world might see that she had not been violently or maliciously drawn thereto.'

"The queen concluded," continues Davison, "that she never was so ill-advised as not to apprehend her own danger, and the necessity she had to proceed to this execution ; and thereupon, after some intermingled speech to and fro, told me that she would have it done as secretly as might be, appointing the hall where she (Queen Mary) was for the place of execution, and misliking the court, or green of the castle, for divers respects, she alleged, with other speech to like effect. Howbeit, as I was ready to depart, she fell into some complaint of Sir Amias Paulet and others, 'that might have eased her of this burden,' wishing that Mr. Secretary (Walsingham) and I would yet write unto both him and Sir Drue Drury to sound their disposition on this behalf.

"And," continues Davison, "albeit I had before excused myself from meddling therein, upon sundry her majesty's former motions, as a matter I utterly prejudged, assuring her 'that it would be so much labour lost, knowing the wisdom and integrity of the gentlemen, whom I thought would not do so unlawful an act for any respect in the world ;' yet, finding her desirous to have the matter attempted, I promised, for her satisfying, to signify this her pleasure to Mr. Secretary, and so, for that time leaving her, went down directly to my Lord Treasurer (Burleigh), to whom I did communicate the said warrant signed, together with such other particulars as had passed at that time between her highness and me. The same afternoon I waited on my Lord Chancellor for the sealing of the said warrant, according to her majesty's direction, which was done between the hours of four

and five, from whence I returned back unto Mr. Secretary Walsingham, whom I had visited by the way, and acquainted with her pleasure, touching the letters that were to be written to the said Sir Amias Paulet and Sir Drue Drury, which, at my return, I found ready to be sent away."

The reader is here presented with the copy of the private official letter in which the two secretaries propose the murder, in plain and direct terms, to Paulet and Drury, by the express commands of their royal mistress :—

WALSINGHAM AND DAVISON TO SIR AMIAS PAULET AND SIR DRUE DRURY.

"February 1, 1586-7.

"After our hearty commendations, we find, by a speech lately made by her majesty (Queen Elizabeth), that she doth note in you both, a lack of that care and zeal for her service, that she looketh for at your hands, in that you have not, in all this time, (of yourselves, without other provocation,) found out some way of *shortening the life of the Scots' queen*, considering the great peril she (Queen Elizabeth) is hourly subject to, *so long as the said queen shall live*; wherein, besides a kind of lack of love towards her, she wonders greatly that you have not that care of your own particular safeties, or rather the preservation of religion and the public good, and prosperity of your country, that reason and policy commandeth, especially having so good a warrant and ground for the *satisfaction of your consciences towards God*, and the discharge of your credit and reputation towards the world, as the oath of association, which you have both so solemnly taken and vowed, especially the matter wherewith *she* (Mary) standeth charged, being so clearly and manifestly proved against her.

"And, therefore, *she* (Elizabeth) taketh it most unkindly, that men, professing that love towards her that you do, should, in a kind of sort, for lack of discharging your duties, cast the burden upon her, knowing, as you do, her indisposition to shed blood, especially of one of that sex and quality, and so near her in blood, as that queen is.

"These respects, we find, do greatly trouble her majesty, who, we assure you, hath sundry times protested, 'that if the regard of the danger of her good subjects and faithful servants, did not more move her than her own peril, she would never be drawn to the shedding of blood.'

"We thought it meet to acquaint you with these speeches, lately passed from her majesty, referring the same to your good judgments. And so we commit you to the protection of the Almighty.

"Your most assured friends,

"FRA. WALSINGHAM.

"WILL. DAVISON."

After stating that the morning after the precious scroll to Paulet and Drury had been despatched, Killigrew came to him

with a message from the queen importing "that if he had not been to the Lord Chancellor, he should forbear going to him till he had spoken again with her," Davison thus continues: "At my coming to her, she demanded of me, 'Whether the warrant were passed the seal?' I told her, 'Yes.' She asked, 'What needeth that haste?' I answered, 'That I had therein made no more haste than herself commanded, and my duty, in a case of that moment, required, which, as I took it, was not to be dallied with.' 'But methinketh,' saith she, 'that it might have been otherwise handled, for the form,' naming unto me some that were of that opinion, whose judgments she commended. I answered, 'that I took the honourable and just way to be the safest and best way, if they meant to have it done at all;' whereto her majesty replying nothing, for that time left me, and went to dinner. From her I went to Mr. Vice-Chamberlain Hatton, with whom I did communicate the warrant and other particulars that had passed between her highness and me touching the despatch thereof." On further consultation, they both decided on going to Burleigh, with whom they agreed that the matter should be communicated to the rest of the lords of the council, and Burleigh took upon himself to prepare the letters to the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, and the others to whom the warrant was directed. The next morning Burleigh sent for Davison and Hatton, and showed the draught he had drawn up of those letters. Hatton considered them too particular in the wording, on which Burleigh offered to draw up others, in more general terms, against the afternoon. The council, being apprised of the business in hand, met in Burleigh's chamber, where he, entering into the particulars of the Scottish queen's offence, the danger of her majesty and State, and the necessity of this execution, and, having shown them the warrant, he apprised them of the suspected intention of the sovereign to shift the burden of it from herself if she could. It is probable, too, that Elizabeth's earnest desire of having the deed performed by a private murder, which she would afterwards charge on whomsoever she could induce to undertake it, was also discussed; but, at all events, the council came to the

unanimous resolution that the warrant should be forthwith despatched, without troubling her majesty any more about it. The subtle conclave, who thus presumed to secure themselves, by outwitting their sovereign, and acting independently of her commands, did Beale (the clerk of the council) the honour of considering him the fittest person to whom they could commit the charge of putting the warrant for the death of the rightful heiress of the throne into execution. He accepted the office, and approved the copies of the letters devised by Burleigh, and having appointed them to be written out fair, against the afternoon, they went to dinner, and between one and two o'clock returned to have the letters signed that were addressed to the lords and commissioners appointed to that duty. These were then delivered to Beale, with earnest request for him to use the utmost diligence in expediting the same.

Elizabeth, meantime, unconscious of the proceedings of her ministers, was still brooding vainly over the idea of a private murder. "The next morning," pursues Davison, "her majesty being in some speech with Burleigh in the private chamber, seeing me come in, called me to her, and, as if she had understood nothing of these proceedings, smiling, told me, 'she had been troubled that night upon a dream she had, that the Scottish queen was executed,' pretending to have been so greatly moved with the news, against me, as in that passion she would have done I wot not what. But this being in a pleasant and smiling manner, I answered her majesty, 'that it was good for me I was not near her, so long as that humour lasted.' But withal, taking hold of her speech, asked her, in great earnest, 'what it meant? and whether, having proceeded thus far, she had not a full and resolute meaning to go through with the said execution, according to the warrant?' Her answer was, 'Yes,' confirmed with a solemn oath, 'only that she thought that it might have received a better form, because this threw all the responsibility upon her herself.' I replied, 'that the form prescribed by the warrant was such as the law required, and could not well be altered with any honesty, justice, or surety to those who were commissioners therein; neither did I

know who could sustain this burthen, if she took it not upon her, being sovereign magistrate, to whom the sword was committed of God for the punishment of the wicked and defence of the good, and without whose authority the life or member of the poorest wretch in her kingdom could not be touched.'

"She answered 'that there were wiser men than myself in the kingdom of other opinion.' I told her 'I could not answer for other men, yet this I was sure of, that I had never yet heard any man give a sound reason to prove it either honourable or safe for her majesty to take any other course than that which standeth with law and justice ;' and so, without further replication or speech, we parted.

"The same afternoon (as I take it) she asked me 'Whether I had heard from Sir Amias Paulet ?' I told her, 'No ;' but within an hour after, going to London, I met with letters from him in answer to those that were written unto him, some few days before, upon her commandment."

This portion of the narrative would be incomplete without the insertion of these memorable letters :—

SIR AMIAS PAULET TO SECRETARY WALSINGHAM.

"SIR,—Your letters of yesterday coming to my hands this present day, at five post meridian, I would not fail, according to your direction, to return my answer, with all possible speed, which I shall deliver to you with great grief and bitterness of mind, in that I am so unhappy as living to see this unhappy day, in which I am required, by direction from my most gracious sovereign, to do an act which God and the law forbiddeth.

"My goods and my life are at her majesty's *disposition* (disposal), and I am ready to lose them the next morrow if it shall please her, acknowledging that I do hold them as of her mere and most gracious favour, and do not desire to enjoy them, but with her highness' good liking. But God forbid I should make so foul a shipwreck of my conscience, or leave so great a blot to my poor posterity, as to shed blood without law or warrant.

"Trusting that her majesty, of her accustomed clemency, and the rather by your good mediation, will take this my answer in good part, as proceeding from one who never will be inferior to any Christian subject living in honour, love, and obedience towards his sovereign, and thus I commit you to the mercy of the Almighty.

"Your most assured poor friend,

"A. POWLET (PAULET).

"From Fotheringaye, the 2nd of February, 1536-7.

"P.S.—Your letters coming in the plural number, seem to be meant

to Sir Drue Drury as to myself, and yet because he is not named in them, neither the letter directed unto him, he forbeareth to make any particular answer, but subscribeth in heart to my opinion.

“D. DRURY.”

The next morning Davison communicated these letters to his royal mistress, which, having read, “her majesty,” pursues Davison, “falling into terms of offence, complaining of ‘the daintiness and (as she called it) perjury of him and others who, contrary to their oath of association, did cast the burden upon herself,’ she rose up, and, after a turn or two, went into the gallery, whither I followed her ; and there renewing her former speech, blaming ‘the niceness of those precise fellows’ (as she termed them), ‘who in words would do great things for her surety, but, indeed, perform nothing ;’ concluded by saying ‘that she could have it well enough done without them.’ And here, entering into *particularities*, named unto me, as I remember, ‘one Wingfield, who,’ she assured me, ‘would, with some others, undertake it,’ which gave me occasion to show unto her majesty how dishonourable, in my poor opinion, any such course would be, and how far she would be from shunning the blame and stain thereof she so much sought to avoid ; and so falling into the particular case of Sir Amias Paulet and Sir Drue Drury, discoursed unto her the great extremity she would have exposed those poor gentlemen to, for if, in a tender care of her surety, they should have done what she desired, she must either allow their act or disallow it. If she allowed it, she took the matter upon herself, with her infinite peril and dishonour ; if she disallowed it, she should not only overthrow the gentlemen themselves, who had always truly and faithfully served and honoured her, but also their estates and posterities ; besides the dishonour and injustice of such a course, which I humbly besought her majesty to consider of, and so, after some little digression and speech about Mr. Secretary and others, touching some things passed heretofore, her majesty, calling to understand whether it were time to go to her closet, brake off our discourse.

“At my next access to her majesty, which, I take, was Tuesday, the day before my coming from Court, I, having certain

things to be signed, her majesty entered of herself into some earnest discourse of the danger she daily lived in, and how it was more than time this matter were dispatched, swearing a great oath, 'that it was a shame for them all that it was not done;' and thereupon spake unto me 'to have a letter written to Mr. Paulet for the despatch thereof, because the longer it was deferred, the more her danger increased;' whereunto, knowing what order had been taken by my lords in sending the commission to the earls, I answered 'that I thought there was no necessity for such a letter, the warrant being so general and sufficient as it was.' Her majesty replied little else, 'but that she thought Mr. Paulet would look for it.'"

The entrance of one of her ladies to hear her majesty's pleasure about dinner broke off this conference, which took place on the very day of Mary's execution at Fotheringay. It is a remarkable fact, withal, in the strangely linked history of these rival queens, that at the very time Elizabeth thundered out her unfeminine execration against those who were (as she erroneously imagined) delaying the death of her hapless kinswoman, Mary was meekly imploring her Heavenly Father "to forgive all those who thirsted for her blood;" and lest this petition should be considered too general, she included the name of Queen Elizabeth in her dying prayer for her own son, not in the scornful spirit of the Pharisee, but according to the divine precept of Him Who has said, "Bless them that curse you, and pray for those that persecute you and despitefully use you." What can be said, in illustration of the dispositions of these two queens, more striking than the simple record of this circumstance, which, remarkable as it is, appears to have escaped the attention of their biographers?

It may appear singular that Davison did not endeavour to calm the ireful impatience of his sovereign by apprising her that the deed was done; but being accustomed to her majesty's stormy temper and characteristic dissimulation, he suspected that she was as perfectly aware as himself of the bloody work that had been performed in the hall of Fotheringay Castle that morning. He knew not how to believe that the queen

could be ignorant that the warrant had been sent down for that purpose, "considering," as he says, "who the counsellors were by whom it was dispatched." One circumstance affords presumptive evidence of Elizabeth's unconsciousness of this fact, which is, that when the news of Mary's execution was brought down to Greenwich early on the morning of February 9th by Henry Talbot, not one of her council would venture to declare it to her, and it was actually concealed from her the whole of that day, which she passed as if nothing remarkable had happened.

In the morning she went out on horseback with her train, and, after her return, she had a long interview with Don Antonio, the claimant of the crown of Portugal, whose title she supported for the annoyance of her great political foe, Philip II. of Spain. The whole day was, in fact, suffered to pass away without one syllable of this important event being communicated to her majesty by her ministers. "In the evening," says Davison, "she learned the news by other means." This was the general ringing of the bells, and the blaze of bonfires that were universally kindled in London and its vicinity as the tidings spread, and the majority of the people appeared intoxicated with joy at what had taken place. Those who inwardly mourned were compelled, by a prudential regard for their own safety, to illuminate their houses and kindle bonfires like the rest.

The queen is said to have inquired the reason "why the bells rang out so merrily?" and was answered, "Because of the execution of the Scottish queen." Elizabeth received the news in silence. "Her majesty would not at the first seem to take any notice of it," says Davison, "but in the morning, falling into some heat and passion, she sent for Mr. Vice-Chamberlain (Hatton), to whom she disavowed the said execution as a thing she never commanded nor intended, casting the burden generally on them all, but chiefly on my shoulders."

Camden tells us "that as soon as the report of the death of the Queen of Scots was brought to Queen Elizabeth, she heard it with great indignation : her countenance altered ; her speech faltered and failed her ; and through excessive sorrow she stood in a manner astonished, insomuch that she gave herself over

to passionate grief, putting herself into a mourning habit, and shedding abundance of tears. Her council she sharply rebuked, and commanded them out of her sight."

No sooner, indeed, was she assured that the crime which she had so long premeditated was actually perpetrated, than the horror of the act appears to have become apparent to herself, and she shrank from the idea of the personal odium she was likely to incur from the commission of so barbarous, so needless an outrage. Looking at the case in all its bearings, there is good reason to suppose that the anger which she manifested, not only against her cautious dupe Davison, but Burleigh and his colleagues, was genuine. Davison clearly shows that they agreed to act upon their own responsibility in despatching the warrant for Mary's execution, under the plausible pretext that they thought it would be most agreeable to their royal mistress for them to take that course; they were also actuated by two very opposite fears—one was that Elizabeth would disgrace both herself and them by having Mary privily despatched in her prison; or, on the other hand, postpone the execution of the warrant from day to day, and possibly die herself in the interim—a contingency above all others to be prevented.

Elizabeth, therefore, if really ignorant of the resolution they had taken, was of course infuriated at their presuming to exercise the power of the Crown independently of her commands. The act would be of secondary importance in the eye of a sovereign of her jealous temperament; but the principle they had established was alarming and offensive to the last degree. Ten men, calling themselves her servants, had constituted themselves a legislative body, *imperio in imperio*, to act by mutual consent, in one instance, independently of the authority of the sovereign; and had taken upon themselves to cause the head of an anointed queen to be stricken off by the common executioner. A dangerous precedent against royalty which in process of time encouraged a more numerous band of confederates to take away the life of their own sovereign, Charles I., in a manner equally illegal and opposed to the spirit of the English Constitution.

Personal hatred to Mary Stuart had not blinded Elizabeth to the possibility of the same principle being exercised against herself on some future occasion ; and, as far as she could, she testified her resentment against the whole junta for the *lèse-majesté* of which they had been guilty, and at the same time endeavoured to escape the odium which the murder of her royal kinswoman was likely to bring on her by flinging the whole burden of the crime on them. Burleigh she forbade her presence with every demonstration of serious displeasure. Walsingham came in for a share of her anger, on which he makes the following cynical comments to Leicester, which afford sufficient evidence of the irritation of both queen and Cabinet at this crisis : " My very good lord, these sharp humours continue still, which doth greatly disquiet her majesty and her poor servants that attend here. The Lord Treasurer remaineth still in disgrace, and behind my back her majesty giveth out very hard speeches of myself, which I the easier credit, for that I find in dealing with her I am nothing gracious ; and if her majesty could be otherwise served, I should not be used." Walsingham goes on, after recounting matters of public business, to say, " The present discord between her majesty and her council hindereth the necessary consultation that were to be desired for the preventing of the manifest perils that hang over this realm." He proceeds to state the queen's perversity in not allowing the necessary supplies for the Low Countries, and says, " her majesty doth wholly bend herself to devise some further means to disgrace her poor council that subscribed, and in respect thereof she neglecteth all other causes."

Elizabeth would probably have endeavoured to emancipate herself from Burleigh's political thralldom if she had not found it impossible to weather out the storm that was gathering against her on the Spanish coast without him. The veteran statesman was, besides, too firmly seated at the helm to suffer himself to be driven from his office by a burst of female temper. He, the Talleyrand of the sixteenth century, understood the art of trimming his bark to suit the gales from all points of the compass. While the tempest of Elizabeth's anger lasted, he

lowered his sails and affected the deepest penitence for having been so unfortunate as to displease her by his zeal for her service, and humiliated himself by writing the most abject letters that could be devised, and after a time succeeded in re-establishing his wonted ascendancy in the Cabinet.

The luckless Davison was, meantime, selected as the scapegoat on whom the whole blame of the death of the Scottish queen was to be laid. He was stripped of his offices, sent to the Tower, and subjected to a Star-Chamber process for the double contempt of revealing the secret communications which had passed between her majesty and him to others of her ministers; this was doubtless the head and front of his offending and the real cause for which he was punished; the other misdemeanour was giving up to them the warrant which had been committed to his special trust. His principal defence consisted in repeated appeals to the conscience of the queen, "with whom," he said, "it did not become him to contend." He was sentenced to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds, and to suffer imprisonment during her majesty's pleasure.

A copy of Davison's sentence was sent by Elizabeth to the King of Scotland, to whom she had previously written a deprecatory letter, which, with many sighs and tears, she consigned to her young kinsman, Robert Carey, one of Lord Hunsdon's sons, whom she made her especial messenger to the Scottish Court. The news of the execution of their queen was received in Scotland with a burst of national indignation so uncontrollable that Carey would have fallen a victim to popular fury if James had not sent a guard for his protection.

The secretary of the English embassy complained of the insulting libels against Queen Elizabeth that were placarded on the walls of Edinburgh. It is also recorded by him that a packet was addressed to Elizabeth, containing a halter, with four ribald lines, describing this present to be "a Scottish chain for the English Jezebel, as a reward for the murder of their queen." When the sessions of the Scotch Parliament closed, the assembled members besought the king on their knees to avenge his mother's death. James manifested feelings

of passionate grief and anger at first ; but though he used menacing language and commenced warlike preparations, the bribes and intrigues of his powerful neighbour, in his Cabinet, soon had the effect of paralysing his efforts to assume a hostile attitude.

Elizabeth's next attempt was to conciliate the Court of France, towards which a decidedly hostile tone had been assumed by her and her ministers, ever since Stafford had accused the resident ambassador, L'Aubespine de Chateauneuf, of concocting a plot against her life. The ports had been closed, and all the despatches addressed to L'Aubespine from his own Court had been detained, opened, and read by Elizabeth's council. A strict embargo had been laid on all the shipping to prevent any person from leaving the kingdom. L'Aubespine applied daily, but in vain, for a passport for the messenger whom he wished to send with letters apprising his sovereign of the execution of his royal sister-in-law, but was told "that the Queen of England did not choose his majesty to be informed of what had been done by any one but the person she would send to him."

"In fact," writes L'Aubespine to Henry III., "the ports have been so strictly guarded for the last fortnight that no one has left the kingdom except a person whom the queen has despatched to Mr. Stafford, to inform your majesty of what has taken place." On the day after Davison had been committed to the Tower, the queen sent for Monsieur Roger, a gentleman of the privy chamber of the King of France, attached to the embassy, and told him "that she was deeply afflicted for the death of the Queen of Scotland ; that it never was her intention to have put her to death, although she had refused the request of M. de Bellievre." She said "that Davison had taken her by surprise, but he was now in a place where he would have to answer for it, and charged Monsieur Roger to tell his majesty of France so." This she said with every demonstration of grief, and almost with tears in her eyes.

At no period of her life does Elizabeth appear in so undignified a light as at this time. On Saturday, March 6th,

she sent for L'Aubespine to dine with her at the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Croydon. She received him in the most courteous and winning manner, and offered the use of men, money, and ammunition to his sovereign, if required by him, in his war against the League. The ambassador replied "that his master had no need of the forces of his neighbours to defend himself." She then discoursed on the affairs of France in general, and related to his excellency much news from Paris of which he had not heard a word. Then she complained of the detention of the English vessels by the King of France, and the ambassador replied "that it had been done in consequence of her ordering the embargo to be laid on the French vessels in her ports." She expressed her desire "to render everything agreeable, and referred all matters of complaint in the commercial relations of the two countries to four commissioners of her Cabinet, with whom she requested him to confer."

All this time the ambassador was endeavouring to escape without entering into two subjects, on which he was reluctant to commit himself by discoursing with so subtle a *diplomate* as Elizabeth: one was the death of the Queen of Scots, the other the affair of a pretended plot in which not only the name of his secretary, Destrappes, but his own had been involved. Elizabeth, however, was not to be circumvented. The more she found him bent on getting away, the more pertinacious was she in her purpose of detaining him till she had compelled him to speak on those delicate points. "I thought," he continues, "to have taken my leave of the said lady without making any answer respecting Destrappes or entering into the subject of the Queen of Scotland; but she took my hand, and led me into a corner of the apartment, and said 'that since she had seen me she had experienced one of the greatest misfortunes and vexations that had ever befallen her, which was, the death of her cousin-german,' of which she vowed to God, with many oaths, 'that she was innocent; that she had indeed signed the warrant; but it was only to satisfy her subjects, as she had never intended to put her to death, except in case of a foreign invasion or a formid-

able insurrection of her own subjects ; that the members of her council, *four of whom were in presence*, had played her a trick which she could never forgive,' and she swore by her Maker's name 'that but for their long services, and for the supposition that they had acted out of consideration for the welfare and safety of her person and State, they should all have lost their heads.' "

Proceeding to make many professions of amity for Henry III., "she protested," says L'Aubespine, "that she would not meddle in any way with the affairs of your subjects, but that then she should consider her own security ; that the Catholic king was daily making offers of peace and friendship, but she would not listen to them, knowing his ambition ; on the contrary, she had sent Drake to ravage his coasts, and was considering about sending the Earl of Leicester to Holland to show that she was not afraid of war ; with so many other observations against those of the League that your majesty may easily conceive, from the length of this dispatch, that she had well prepared herself for this audience, in which she detained me for three good hours, as I let her say all she pleased."

The conference ended, little to the satisfaction of either party, for the ambassador evidently considered it an insult to his understanding that she should expect him even to pretend to give her credit for her good intentions, and she perceived not only that she had failed to deceive him, but that he did not think it worth his while to dissemble with her.

Elizabeth was too well aware of Henry III.'s weakness, both as a monarch and a man, to entertain the slightest uneasiness on the score of his resentment. Her great and sole cause of apprehension was lest a coalition should be formed against her between Spain, Scotland, and France for the invasion of England, under the pretext of avenging the murder of the Scottish queen. From this danger she extricated herself with her usual diplomatic address by amusing the Court of Spain with a deceptive treaty, in which she affected to be so well disposed to give up her interest in the Netherlands for the sake of establishing herself on amicable terms with her royal brother-in-law that her

Dutch allies began to suspect it was her intention to sacrifice them altogether.

The threatening demeanour of the King of Scotland she quelled by artfully bringing forward an embryo rival to his claims on the succession of the English throne in the person of his little cousin, Lady Arabella Stuart. This young lady, whom Elizabeth had scarcely ever seen, and never, certainly, taken the slightest notice of before, she now sent for to her Court, and though she was scarcely twelve years of age, she made her dine in public with her, and gave her precedence of all the countesses, and every other lady present. This was no more than the place which Arabella Stuart was, in right of her birth, entitled to claim in the English Court, being the nearest in blood to the queen of the elder female line from Henry VII., and next to the King of Scotland in the regular order of succession to the throne of England.

L'Aubespine, in his despatch of August 25th, 1587, relates the manner in which Queen Elizabeth called the attention of his lady (who had dined with her majesty on the preceding Monday at the same table) to her youthful relative. "After dinner, the queen being in a lofty grand hall with Madame L'Aubespine de Chateauneuf and all the countesses and maids-of-honour near her, and surrounded by a crowd of gentlemen, her majesty asked the ambassadress 'if she had noticed a little girl, her relation, who was there,' and called the said Arabella to her. Madame de Chateauneuf said much in her commendation, and remarked how well she spoke French, and that she 'appeared very sweet and gracious.'

"'Regard her well,' replied the queen, 'for she is not so simple as you may think. One day she will be even as I am, and will be lady-mistress ; but I shall have been before her.'"

These observations were doubtless intended, as L'Aubespine shrewdly remarks, to excite the apprehensions of the King of Scots, and to act as a check upon him.

Some years later the innocent puppet of whom Elizabeth had made this artful use became an object of jealous alarm to herself, and would probably have shared the fate of all the other royal

ladies who stood in juxtaposition to the throne if her own life had been prolonged a few months.

This dark chapter of the annals of the maiden monarch closed with the farce of her assuming the office of chief mourner at the funeral of her royal victim, when the mangled remains of Mary Stuart, after being permitted to lie unburied and neglected for six months, were at last interred, with regal pomp, in Peterborough Cathedral, attended by a train of nobles and ladies of the highest rank in the English Court. The Countess of Bedford acted as Queen Elizabeth's proxy on that occasion, and made the offering in her name. "What a glorious princess!" exclaimed the sarcastic pontiff, Sixtus V., when the news reached the Vatican; "it is a pity," he added, "that Elizabeth and I cannot marry—our children would have mastered the whole world."

Sixtus entertained so high an opinion of Elizabeth's regnal talents that he was accustomed to say "there were but three sovereigns in Europe who understood the art of governing—namely, himself, the King of Navarre, and the Queen of England,—of all the princes in Christendom but two, Henry and Elizabeth, to whom he wished to communicate the mighty things that were revolving in his soul, and as they were heretics he could not do it." He was even then preparing to reiterate the anathemas of his predecessors, Pius V. and Gregory XIII., and to proclaim a general crusade against Elizabeth.*

* See Appendix, Note F.

Elizabeth's signature to Mary's death-warrant.

CHAPTER X

Renewed influence of the Earl of Leicester with Elizabeth—Hostile proceedings of Spain—Philip II. sends an insulting Latin tetrastic to Elizabeth—Her witty reply—The Armada—Female knight made by Queen Elizabeth—Her heroic deportment—Her visit to the camp at Tilbury—Enthusiasm of her subjects—Defeat and dispersion of the Spanish fleet—Medals struck on the occasion—Death of Leicester—His legacy to the queen—She distrains his goods—Elizabeth goes in State to St. Paul's to return thanks for the defeat of the Armada—Her popularity—Way of life—Her love of history—Characteristic traits and anecdotes of Elizabeth—Religious persecutions—Her imperious manner to the House of Commons—Arbitrary treatment of the Earl of Arundel—Her love for Essex—The escapade of Essex—He joins the expedition to Lisbon—His return—Increasing fondness of the queen—Her anger at his marriage—His temporary disgrace, and expedition to France—Elizabeth's letter to Henry IV. describing Essex's character—Her political conduct with regard to France—Takes offence with Henry—Her fierce letter to him—She favours the Cecil party—Sir Robert Cecil's flattery to the queen—Her unkind treatment of Hatton—Endeavours to atone for it in his last illness—His death—Angry expressions against Essex to the French ambassador—Recalls him home—His expostulation—She insists on his return—He sends Carey to her—Essex returns—Their reconciliation.

It is worthy of observation that while Burleigh, Walsingham, Davison, and even Hatton, experienced the effects of the queen's displeasure, which was long and obstinately manifested towards the members of her Cabinet, even to the interruption of public business, Leicester escaped all blame, although as deeply implicated in the unauthorised despatch of the warrant for the execution of the Scottish queen as any of his colleagues. It seemed as if he had regained all his former influence over the mind of his royal mistress since his return from the Netherlands; yet he had evinced incapacity, disobedience, and even cowardice during the inauspicious period of his command there. English treasure and English blood had been lavished in vain; the allies

murmured, and the high-spirited and chivalric portion of the gentlemen of England complained that the honour of the country was compromised in the hands of a man who was unworthy of the high charge that had been confided to his keeping. Instead of punishing him, his partial sovereign had bestowed preferments and places of great emolument upon him. As if to console him for the popular ill-will, she made him lord steward of her household, and chief justice in eyre south of the Trent, and finally sent him back with a reinforcement of five thousand men and a large supply of money.

Matters had gone from bad to worse in his absence, even to the desertion of a large body of English troops to the King of Spain. Leicester endeavoured to make up for his incapacity both as a general and a governor by ostentatious fasting and daily attending sermons. The evil tenor of his life from his youth upward, and his treacherous, underhand practices against those illustrious patriots, Barneveldt and Maurice, Prince of Orange, rendered these exhibitions disgusting to persons of integrity and true piety. He lost the confidence of all parties. One disaster followed another, and the fall of Sluys completed the measure of public indignation. Articles of impeachment were prepared against him at home, and the queen was compelled to recall him, that he might meet the inquiry.

That the royal lioness of Tudor was roused by the disgrace the military character of England had suffered under his auspices to the utterance of some stern threats of punishment may be easily surmised, for Leicester hastened to throw himself at her feet on his return, and with tears in his eyes passionately implored her "not to bury him alive whom she had raised from the dust," with other expressions meet only to be addressed by the most abject of slaves to an oriental despot. Elizabeth was, however, so completely mollified by his humiliation that she forgave and reassured him with promises of her powerful protection. The next morning, when summoned to appear before the council to answer the charges that were preferred against him, he appeared boldly, and, instead of kneeling at the foot of the table, took his usual seat at the board; and when

the secretary began to read the list of charges against him, he rose and interrupted him by inveighing against the perfidy of his accusers, and, appealing to the queen, came off triumphantly. Lord Buckhurst, by whom his misconduct had been denounced, received a severe reprimand, and was ordered to consider himself a prisoner in his own house during the royal pleasure. The haughty peer, though nearly related to the queen, submitted to this arbitrary and unjust sentence with the humility of a beaten hound, and even debarred himself from the solace of his wife and children's company during the period of his disgrace, which lasted during the residue of Leicester's life.

The breach between Philip and Elizabeth was, meantime, every day becoming wider, and though they endeavoured to beguile each other with deceitful negotiations for a peace, the Spaniard was daily increasing his naval appointments for the mighty expedition with which he fondly imagined he should overwhelm his female antagonist, and Elizabeth, meantime, was like an active chess-queen, checking his game in every unguarded point by means of her adventurous maritime commanders, who, from their bold and unexpected exploits, might be compared in their movements to the knights in that game. Drake, at this threatening crisis, sailed fearlessly into Cadiz harbour, and burned, sunk, or destroyed upwards of eighty of Philip's vessels, which he facetiously termed "singeing the don's whiskers;" he then bore on triumphantly to the coast of Portugal, and in the mouth of the Tagus defied the admiral of Spain to come out with all his fleet, and do battle with him on the sea; and finally returned home laden with the spoils of the *St. Philip* (the largest of all the Spanish treasure-ships), returning with her precious lading from the New World.

Although Drake had been commissioned by the queen for these daring enterprises, she would not openly avow it, because it was inconsistent with the pacific treaty that was still in the course of negotiation between her and Spain, but tacitly allowed the stigma of piracy to sully the well-earned laurels of her brave seamen.

When Philip's gigantic preparations were sufficiently advanced

to intimidate, as he imagined, the most courageous female sovereign that ever swayed a sceptre, he offered Elizabeth, by his ambassador, the following insulting conditions of peace, in a Latin tetrastic, which was to be considered his ultimatum :

"Te veto ne pergas bello defendere Belgas,
Quæ Dracus ereperit, nunc restituantur oportet;
Quas pater overtit, jubea te cendere cellas:
Religio papæ fac restituantur ad unquam."

Which may be thus rendered in English :—

"Belgic rebels aid no more,
Treasures seized by Drake restore;
And whate'er thy sire o'erthrew,
In the papal Church, renew."

"*Ad Græcas, bone rex fient mandata kalendas,*" was the contemptuous rejoinder of Elizabeth, of which the popular version is as follows :—

"Mighty king, lo, this thy will
At latter Lammas we'll fulfil!"

The literal sense is, "Your order, good king, shall be obeyed in the days when the Greeks reckoned by kalends," meaning never; for kalends were not known among the Greeks, and she shrewdly appoints a time past for the performance of that which is yet to be done. Horace Walpole extols this classic jest as one of the most brilliant of the maiden monarch's impromptu repartees; but it certainly requires a little explanation to render it intelligible to persons less accustomed to the sharp encounter of keen wits than Philip of Spain and Queen Elizabeth.

An encounter of a sterner nature was now about to take place between the "royal vestal throned by the West" and the haughty suitor whom she had thirty years before rejected as a consort. The events of this spirit-stirring epoch must, however, be only briefly recounted.

In the hope of depriving Elizabeth of the services of at least a third of her subjects, Pope Sixtus V. had reiterated the anathema of his predecessors, Pius and Gregory, and proclaimed, withal, a crusade to Papal Europe against the heretical Queen of England. Elizabeth was advised to avert the possibility

of a Catholic revolt by a general massacre of the leading men of that persuasion throughout her realm. She rejected the iniquitous counsel with abhorrence, and proved her wisdom, even in a political sense, by her decision, for the Catholic aristocracy and gentry performed their duty as loyal liegemen on that occasion, and were liberal in their voluntary contribution of men and money for the defence of queen and country from a foreign invader.

Philip II. now openly asserted his rival claim to the throne of England as the legitimate heir of the line of Lancaster, through his descent from Philippa Plantagenet, Queen of Portugal, and Catharine Plantagenet, Queen of Castille, the daughters of John of Gaunt. This antiquated pretension, however laughable it might have been under other circumstances, was sufficient to create uneasiness in a reigning sovereign who was threatened with the descent of so formidable an invading force from the pretender. It proved, in the end, a favourable circumstance to Elizabeth, as it not only deterred the King of Scots from allying himself with Philip, but bound him to her cause by the strong ties of self-interest, as he was the undoubted heir of the line whence her title was derived.

While every day brought fresh rumours of the increase of the overwhelming armament with which the Spanish monarch fondly thought to hurl the last of the Tudors from her seat of empire, and degrade England into a province of Spain, Elizabeth rallied all the energies of her fearless spirit to maintain the unequal contest valiantly. The tone of her mind at this period was to be perceived even from the following trifling incident. Going one day to visit Burleigh at his house in the Strand, and being told he was confined to his bed with the gout, she desired to be conducted to his apartment. When the tapestry was raised that covered the little door that led to his chamber, it was feared that her majesty's lofty head-tire would be disarranged in passing under, and she was therefore humbly requested by Burleigh's man to stoop.

"For your master's sake," she replied, "I will stoop, but not for the King of Spain."

The mightiest fleet that had ever swept the ocean was at that time preparing to sail from the coast of Spain, consisting of 130 men-of-war, having on board 19,290 soldiers, 8,350 mariners, 2,080 galley-slaves, besides a numerous company of priests to maintain discipline and stir up religious fervour in the host. There was not a noble family in Spain that did not send forth, in that expedition, son, brother, or nephew as a volunteer in quest of fame and fortune. A loftier spirit animated the queen and people of the threatened land. All party feelings, all sectarian divisions and jealousies, were laid aside, for every bosom appeared overflowing with that generous and ennobling principle of exalted patriotism which Burke has truly called "the cheap defence of nations."

Elizabeth took upon herself the command of her forces in person. She was the nominal generalissimo of two armies. The first, commanded by the Earl of Leicester, by the title of Lieutenant-General, consisting of 23,000 men, was stationed at Tilbury; the other, meant for the defence of the metropolis, and termed the Army Royal, or Queen's Body Guard, was placed under Lord Hunsdon. She chose, for her Lord High Admiral, Baron Effingham, whose father, Lord William Howard, and whose grandfather, Thomas Duke of Norfolk, had filled the same station with great distinction. Sir Francis Drake was her Vice-Admiral.

Stowe describes in lively terms the gallant bearing of the newly raised bands of militia as they marched towards the rendezvous at Tilbury. "At every rumour of the approach of the foe and the prospect of doing battle with them they rejoiced," he says, "like lusty giants about to run a race." Every one was in a state of warlike excitement, and Elizabeth herself was transported by the enthusiasm of the moment into the extraordinary act of bestowing the accolade of knighthood on a lady who had expressed herself in very valiant and loyal terms on the occasion. This female knight was Mary, the wife of Sir Hugh Cholmondeley, of Vale Royal, and was distinguished by the name of "the bold lady of Cheshire."

While female hearts were thus kindling with a glow of

patriotism which disposed the more energetic of the daughters of England to emulate the deeds of Joan of Arc, if the men had waxed faint in the cause of their threatened country, the Spanish fleet sailed from the mouth of the Tagus in the full confidence of victory, having received from the haughty monarch who sent it forth for conquest the name of the Invincible Armada.

One battle on sea and one on land the Spaniards deemed they should have to fight, and no more, to achieve the conquest of England. Little did they know of the unconquerable spirit of the sovereign and the people of the land which they imagined was to be thus lightly won; and when presumptuously relying on the fourfold superiority of their physical force, they forgot that the battle is not always to the strong. The elements from the first fought against the Invincible Armada, and guarded England.

May 29th, 1588, beheld the mighty array of tall vessels leave the bay of Lisbon. Off Cape Finisterre a storm from the west scattered the fleet along the coast of Galicia, and, after much damage had been done, compelled the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the inexperienced grandee by whom this stupendous naval force was commanded, to run into the harbour of Corunna for the repair of his shattered vessels. This disaster was reported in England as the entire destruction of the Armada, and Elizabeth, yielding to the natural parsimony of her disposition, sent orders to her Lord Admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, to dismantle immediately four of her largest vessels of war. That able and sagacious naval chief promised to defray the expense out of his private fortune, and detained the ships. His foresight, firmness, and generous patriotism saved his country. On July 19th, after many days of anxious watching, through fog and adverse winds, Howard was informed by the bold pirate Fleming that the Armada was hovering off the Lizard Point, and lost no time in getting out of harbour into the main sea. "The next day," says Camden, "the English descried the Spanish ships, with lofty turrets, like castles, in front like a half-moon, the wings thereof spreading out about the length of seven miles, sailing very slowly, though with full sails, the winds being, as it were,

tired with carrying them, and the ocean groaning with the weight of them."

On the 21st the Lord Admiral of England, sending a pinnace before called the *Defiance*, announced war by discharging her ordnance, and presently his own ship, called the *Ark Royal*, thundered thick and furiously upon the admiral (as he thought) of the Spaniards; but it was Alphonso de Leva's ship. Soon after Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher played stoutly with their ordnance upon the hindmost squadron. But while the first day's battle of this fierce contest was thus gallantly commenced by England's brave defenders on the main within sight of the shore, England's stout-hearted queen performed her part no less courageously on land. The glorious achievements of the naval heroes who for eighteen days grappled with the Invincible upon the waves, and finally quelled the overweening pride of Spain, have been recorded by Camden and all the general historians of the age; the personal proceedings of Queen Elizabeth at this time must occupy the attention of her biographer.

The ardent desire of the queen to proceed to the coast for the purpose of being the foremost to repel the invaders, in the event of the hosts of Spain effecting a landing, was, in the first instance, overruled by her council, and she took up her abode at her palace of Havering Bower, a central station between the van and rear of her army, and at a convenient distance from the metropolis. Gravesend was fortified and a bridge of barges drawn across the Thames, both to oppose the passage of the invading fleet, should any portion of the expedition have succeeded in entering the Nore, and to afford a means of communication for supplies of men and munition from Kent and Essex. Everything wore a martial and inspiring aspect, and all hearts were beating high with loyal and chivalric enthusiasm.

The day on which Elizabeth went, in royal and martial pomp, to visit her loyal camp at Tilbury has generally been considered the most interesting of her whole life. Never, certainly, did she perform her part, as the female leader of an heroic nation, with more imposing effect than on that occasion. Midway between the fort and the camp her majesty was met by Sir Roger

Williams, the second in command, at the head of two thousand horse, which he divided into two brigades, one to go before her, and the other behind to guard her person, and, together with two thousand foot soldiers, escorted her to Master Rich's house, about three miles from the camp, where she was to sleep that night.

The grand display was reserved for the following morning, when the female majesty of England came upon the ground, mounted on a stately charger, with a marshal's truncheon in her hand, and, forbidding any of her retinue to follow her, presented herself to her assembled troops, who were drawn up to receive their stout-hearted liege lady on the hill near Tilbury church. She was attended only by the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Ormond, who bore the Sword of State before her; a page followed, carrying her white-plumed regal helmet. She wore a polished steel corslet on her breast, and below this warlike bodice descended a fardingale of such monstrous amplitude that it is wonderful how her mettled war-horse submitted to carry a lady encumbered with a gaberdine of so strange a fashion; but in this veritable array the royal heroine rode, bareheaded, between the lines, with a courageous but smiling countenance; and when the thunders of applause with which she was greeted by her army had a little subsided, she harangued them in the following popular speech:—

“My loving people,—We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes for fear of treachery; but I do assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear; I have always so behaved myself that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects; and, therefore, I am come amongst you as you see at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all—to lay down for my God and for my kingdoms and for my people my honour and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king—and of a

King of England, too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm ; to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms—I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already, for your forwardness, you have deserved rewards and crowns, and we do assure you, on the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you. For the meantime, my Lieutenant-General shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject ; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God, of my kingdoms, and of my people.”

The soldiers, many of whom, be it remembered, were volunteers of gentle blood and breeding, unanimously responded to this address by exclaiming, “Is it possible that any Englishman can abandon such a glorious cause, or refuse to lay down his life in defence of this heroic princess ?”

Elizabeth was then fifty-five years old—she had borne the sceptre and the sword of empire with glory for thirty years. Time, which had faded her youthful charms, robbed the once plump cheek of its roundness, and elongated the oval contour of her face, had, nevertheless, endeared her to her people by rendering her every day more perfect in the queenly art of captivating their regard by a gracious and popular demeanour. She had a smile and a pleasant speech for every one who approached her with demonstrations of affection and respect. Her high pale forehead was indeed furrowed with the lines of care, and her lofty features sharpened, but her piercing eye retained its wonted fires, and her majestic form was unbent by the pressure of years. The Protestants hailed her as a mother in Israel—another Deborah, for the land had had rest in her time. The persecuted Catholics felt like patriots, and forgot their personal wrongs when they saw her, like a true daughter of the Plantagenets, vindicating the honour of England, undismayed by the stupendous armament that threatened her coast, and united with every class and denomination of her subjects in applauding and supporting her in her

dauntless determination. Perhaps there was not a single man among the multitudes who that day beheld their maiden monarch's breast sheathed in the warrior's iron panoply, and heard her declaration "that she would be herself their general," that did not feel disposed to exclaim :—

"Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a queen?"

Although the news from her majesty's fleet was of the most cheering nature, the Armada was still formidable in numbers and strength, and serious apprehensions were entertained of the landing of the Prince of Parma, with the Flemish armament and flotilla, while the English navy was engaged in battling with Medina Sidonia in the Channel.

A mighty storm—a storm which, to use the emphatic expression of Strada, "shook heaven and earth"—finally decided the contest, and delivered England from the slightest apprehension of a rally and fresh attack from the scattered ships of the Armada. The gallant Howard chased them northward as long as he could consistently with the safety of his own vessels and the want of ammunition, of which the parsimonious interference of the queen, in matters really out of a woman's province, had caused an insufficient supply to be doled out to her brave seamen. But winds and waves fought mightily for England, and while not so much as a single boat of ours was lost, many of the stateliest ships of Spain were dashed upon the shores of Ireland and Scotland, where their crews perished miserably.

The storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied with heavy rain, which befell the evening the queen departed from Tilbury, was doubtless the skirts of one of the tempests which proved so fatal to the scattered ships of the Armada. Great crowds of noblemen and gentlemen met and welcomed the queen at her landing at Westminster, and attended her to St. James's Palace, and day after day entertained her with warlike exercises, tilts, and tourneys. Everything then assumed a martial character. Appropriate medals were struck in commemoration of the victory, with the device of a fleet flying under full sail, with this

inscription, "*Venit, vidit, fugit*"—"It came, it saw, and fled." Others, in compliment to the female sovereign, bore the device of the fire-ships scattering the Spanish fleet, with this legend, "*Dux femina facti*"—"It was done by a woman." Very fully did the people of England appreciate the merits of their sovereign on this occasion, and by them she was all but deified in the delirium of their national pride and loyalty.

Elizabeth bestowed a pension on her brave kinsman, the Lord-Admiral Howard, and provided for all the wounded seamen. She told Howard "that she considered him and his officers as persons born for the preservation of their country." The other commanders and captains she always recognised whenever she saw them, graciously saluting them by their names. Her young kinsman Essex she made Knight of the Garter. Her great reward was, however, reserved for Leicester, and for him she created the office of Lord-Lieutenant of England and Ireland—an office that would have invested him with greater power than any sovereign of this country had ever ventured to bestow on a subject—so strangely had he regained his influence over her mind since his return from the Netherlands. The patent for this unprecedented dignity was made out, and only awaited the royal signature, when the earnest remonstrances of Burleigh and Hatton deterred her majesty from committing so great an error. Leicester was bitterly disappointed, and probably did not forego the promised preferment without an angry altercation with his sovereign; for it is stated that she became so incensed with him that she declined all reconciliation, and brought him into a despondency which ended in his death. He quitted the Court in disgust, and being seized with a burning fever, probably one of the autumnal endemics caught in the Essex salt-marches while disbanding the army at Tilbury, he died on September 4th, at Cornbury Park, in Oxfordshire, on his way to Kenilworth.

Others have asserted that his death was caused by a cup of poison which he had prepared for his countess, of whom he had become frantically jealous; but my Lady Lettice, having by some means acquainted herself with his intention, took the opportunity of exchanging his medicine, during a violent fit of indigestion, for

the deadly draught he had drugged for her. She next married his equerry, Sir Christopher Blount, the object of his jealousy.

Leicester had been remarkable for his fine person, but he had grown corpulent and red-faced during the latter years of his life. He was fifty-five years of age at the time of his death. His will is a very curious document, especially that portion of it which regards Queen Elizabeth :

“And first of all, before and above all persons, it is my duty to remember my most dear and most gracious sovereign, whose creature, under God, I have been, and who hath been a most bountiful and princely mistress unto me, as well as advancing me to many honours, as in maintaining me many ways, by her goodness and liberality ; and as my best recompence to her most excellent majesty can be, from so mean a man, chiefly in prayer to God, so, whilst there was any breath in my body, I never failed it, even as for mine own soul. And as it was my greatest joy in my lifetime to serve her to her contentation, so it is not unwelcome to me, being the will of God, to die, and end this life in her service. And yet, albeit I am not able to make any piece of recompence for her great goodness, yet will I presume to present unto her a token of an humble and faithful heart, as the least that ever I can send her, and with this prayer withal, that it may please the Almighty God, not only to make her the oldest prince that ever reigned over England, but to make her the godliest, the *virtouest*, and the worthiest in His sight that He ever gave over any nation, that she may indeed be a blessed mother and nurse to this people and Church of England, which the Almighty God grant, for Christ's sake. The token I do bequeath unto her majesty is the jewel with three fair emeralds, with a fair large table diamond in the midst, without a foil, and set about with many diamonds, without foil, and a rope of fair white pearl, to the number of six hundred, to hang the said jewel at, which pearl and jewel was once purposed for her majesty, against her coming to Wansted, but it must now thus be disposed, which I do pray you, my dear wife, to see performed and delivered to some of those whom I shall hereafter nominate and appoint to be my overseers for her majesty.”

The dying favourite might have spared himself the trouble of bequeathing this costly legacy to his royal mistress, together with the elaborate preamble of honeyed words that introduced this bequest ; for though she received the unexpected tidings of his death with a passionate burst of tears, her avarice got the better of her love, and she ordered, in the same hour, her distringas to be placed on his personal effects, and had them sold by public auction, to liquidate certain sums in which he was indebted to

her exchequer—a proceeding which says little for her sensibility or delicacy.

A series of public thanksgivings took place in the city of London to celebrate the late national deliverance ; but it was not till November 24th that her majesty went in State to St. Paul's for that purpose. The queen dismounted from her chariot-throne at the great west door of St. Paul's Cathedral, between the hours of twelve and one, where she was received by the Bishop of London, the Dean of St. Paul's, and other of the clergy, to the number of upwards of fifty, all in rich copes, the gorgeous vestments of the Church of Rome being still used on great festival occasions.

On entering the church, Elizabeth knelt down and made her hearty prayers to God, which prayers being finished, she was, under a rich canopy, brought through the long west aisle to her traverse in the choir, the clergy singing the Litany, which being ended, she was brought to a closet made for the purpose out of the north wall of the church, towards the pulpit cross, where she heard a sermon made by Dr. Pierce, Bishop of Salisbury. The text of this sermon is said to have been from the appropriate words, "Thou didst blow with thy winds, and they were scattered." The banners and other trophies from the conquered Armada were hung up in the church.

Bishop Goodman gives the following description of Elizabeth's deportment a few weeks after the dispersion of the Armada :—

"I did then live in the Strand, near St. Clement's Church, when suddenly there was a report (it was then December, about five, and very dark) that the queen was gone to council, and I was told, 'If you will see the queen, you must come quickly.' Then we all ran, when the Court gates were set open, and no man hindered us from coming in ; there we staid an hour and a half, and the yard was full, there being a great number of torches, when the queen came out in great State. Then we cried—

"'God save your majesty !'

"And the queen turned to us and said, 'God bless you all, my good people !'

"Then we cried again, 'God save your majesty !' And the

queen said again to us, 'Ye may well have a greater prince, but ye shall never have a more loving prince.' And so the queen and the crowd there, looking upon one another awhile, her majesty departed. This wrought such an impression upon us, for shows and pageants are best seen by torch-light, that all the way long we did nothing but talk of what an admirable queen she was, and how we would all adventure our lives in her service."

Elizabeth frequently spent the winter in London, and, according to the witness of a contemporary who has written much in her praise, led no idle life. Before day, every morning, she transacted business with her secretaries of State and masters of requests. She caused the orders in council, proclamations, and all other papers relating to public affairs to be read, and gave such orders as she thought fit on each, which were set down in short notes either by herself or her secretaries. If she met with anything perplexing, she sent for her most sagacious councillors, and debated the matter with them, carefully weighing the arguments on each side till she was able to come to a correct decision. When wearied with her morning work, she would take a walk in her garden, if the sun shone, but if the weather were wet or windy, she paced her long galleries, in company with some of the most learned gentlemen of her Court, with whom she was wont to discuss intellectual topics. There was scarcely a day in which she did not devote some portion of her time to reading history or some other important study. She would commonly have some learned man with her, or at hand, to assist her, whose labour and talents she would well reward.

Thus she spent her winter. In summer-time, when she was hungry she would eat something that was light of digestion, with the windows open to admit the gentle breezes from the gardens or pleasant hills. Sometimes she would do this alone, but oftener with the favoured few whose company she preferred. She ate very little, and in her declining life became still more abstemious. She seldom drank anything but common beer, fearing the use of wine, lest it should cloud her faculties. She strictly observed all the fast-days, and then allowed no meat to be served up. When she dined in public, she ordered her table to be served with the

greatest magnificence, and the side tables to be adorned with costly plate, taking great pride in displaying her treasures, especially when she entertained the foreign ambassadors. Her nobles then waited upon her very reverentially. The cupbearer never presented the cup without much ceremony, always kneeling when he gave or took it ; but this was by no means remarkable, as she was always served on the knee. Songs and music were heard during the banquet.

If she dined in private, she generally in summer reposed herself for a short time on an Indian couch, curiously and richly covered ; but in the winter she omitted her noon sleep. At supper she would relax herself with her friends and attendants, and endeavour to draw them into merry and pleasant discourse. After supper she would sometimes listen to a song, or a lesson or two played on the lute. She would then admit Tarleton, a famous comedian, and other persons of the kind, to divert her with stories of the town and any droll occurrences that befel ; but would express her displeasure if any uncourteous personality were used towards any one present, or the bounds of modesty transgressed. Tarleton, however, either from the natural presumption of his character or suborned by Burleigh, took the liberty of aiming his sarcastic shafts at two of the men most distinguished by the favour of royalty. First he glanced at Raleigh's influence with the queen, and then, unawed by her majesty's frown, he went on to reflect on the over-great power and riches of the Earl of Leicester, which was received with such unbounded applause by all present that Elizabeth affected to hear it with unconcern, but was inwardly so deeply offended that she forbade Tarleton and the rest of her jesters from coming near her table any more.

Elizabeth had had a previous warning of the folly of sovereigns in allowing persons of more wit than manners the opportunity of exercising their sharp weapons against royalty. One of her jesters, named Pace, having transgressed once or twice in that way, she had forbidden him her presence. One of his patrons, however, undertook to make his peace with her majesty, and promised in his name that he would conduct himself with more

discretion if he were permitted to resume his office for the amusement of the Court, on which the queen allowed him to be brought in. As soon as she saw him, she exclaimed, "Come on, Pace ; now we shall hear of our faults !"

"What is the use of speaking of what all the town is talking ?" growled the incorrigible cynic.

In moments when her mind required relaxation of a graver character, Elizabeth displayed her sound judgment in the pleasure she took in the conversation of learned travellers, with whom she would talk publicly, and ask them many questions concerning the Government, customs, and discipline used abroad. Sometimes she recreated herself with a game of chess, dancing, or singing. Occasionally she played at cards and tables, and if she won she would be sure to demand the money. When she retired to her bed-chamber, she was attended by the married ladies of her household, among whom are particularly mentioned the Marchioness of Winchester, the Countess of Warwick, and Lady Scrope. The *entrée* of this apartment was chiefly, we are told, confined to Leicester, Hatton, Essex, the lord-admiral, and Sir Walter Raleigh. When she found herself sleepy, she would dismiss those who were there with much kindness and gravity, and so betake herself to rest—some lady of good quality who enjoyed her confidence always lying in the same chamber ; and besides her guards, who were constantly on duty, there was always a gentleman of good quality and some others up in the next chamber, who were to wake her in case anything extraordinary happened.

"She was subject," says her warm panegyrist, Bohun, "to be vehemently transported with anger ; and when she was so, she would show it by her voice, her countenance, and her hand. She would chide her familiar servants so loud that they who stood afar off might sometimes hear her voice ; and it was reported that for small offences she would strike her maids-of-honour with her hand." This report is confirmed by the witness of her godson, Harrington, and many other contemporaries, who enjoyed the opportunity of being behind the scenes in the virgin Court.

It is to be observed, however, that the stormy explosions of temper to which Queen Elizabeth occasionally gave way were confined to the recesses of her palace. They were indulged without restraint in the bed-chamber, they shook the council-room, and they were sometimes witnessed in the presence-chamber, but they never were seen or heard beyond those walls. Her ladies complained that they had felt the weight of the royal arm ; foreign ambassadors, as well as her own courtiers, have reported her fierce rejoinders, her startling oaths ; but to her people she was all sunshine and good-humour. Her strength, her wealth, her greatness were centred in their affection ; and she was too wise to incur by any impatient gesture or haughty expression the risk of alienating the love with which they regarded her.

In her progresses she was always most easy of approach ; private persons and magistrates, men, women, and children came joyfully, and without any fear, to wait upon her and to see her. Her ears were then open to the complaints of the afflicted and of those who had been in any way injured. She would not suffer the meanest of her people to be shut out from the places where she resided, but the greatest and the least appeared equal in her sight. She took with her own hand, and read with the greatest goodness, the petitions of the meanest rustics, and disdained not to speak kindly to them and to assure them that she would take a particular care of their affairs.

She never appeared tired, nor out of temper, nor annoyed, at the most unseasonable or uncourtly approach, nor was she offended with the most impudent and importunate petitioner. There was no disturbance to be seen in her countenance, no reproaches nor reproofs escaped her, nor was there anything in the whole course of her reign, not even the glorious success of her navy against the boasted armament of Spain, that more won the hearts of her people than her condescension and facility of access, and the gracious manner in which she demeaned herself towards all who came to offer the unbought homage of their love and loyalty.

It is ever to be lamented that Elizabeth stained the glorious

year of the Armada with a series of cruel persecutions on the score of religion. January 14th, 1588, a wretched deist named Francis Wright, *alias* Kit of Wymondham, was burned alive in the castle ditch at Norwich. He was the fourth who had suffered in the same place within the last five years for promulgating erroneous opinions. The same year six Catholic priests were hanged, drawn, and quartered; four laymen who had embraced Protestantism, for returning to their old belief; four others and a gentlewoman of the name of Ward, for concealing Catholic priests, besides fifteen of their companions, who were arraigned for no other offence than their theological opinions. Very heavy and repeated fines were levied on those whom it was not considered expedient to put to death. The fines of recusants formed a considerable item in the Crown revenues at that period, and they were, of course, hunted out with keen rapacity by an odious swarm of informers, who earned a base living by augmenting the miseries of their unfortunate fellow-creatures.

Another intolerable grievance of Elizabeth's Government was the custom of borrowing Privy Seal loans, as they were called. A more oppressive mode of taxation can scarcely be imagined. Whenever her majesty's ministers heard of any person who had amassed a sum of ready money, they sent to the next magistrate of the district papers sealed with her Privy Seal, signifying her gracious intention of becoming his debtor to a certain amount. The Privy Seal loan papers sometimes offered 10 and 12 per cent. interest, but no other security than the personal one of the sovereign for the payment of either principal or interest, and in case of death left the liquidation of the debt to the honour of the successor to the crown. This expedient was first resorted to by Cardinal Wolsey to supply the exigencies of his profligate sovereign, Henry VIII. Such was the inauspicious dawn of a system of facile involvement.

There was the less necessity for partial and unconstitutional extortions from private individuals in the golden days of good Queen Bess, since her Parliaments were exceedingly liberal in according supplies. That which met February, 1589, granted

her two subsidies of two shillings and eightpence in the pound, besides four-tenths and a fifteenth. The convocation of the clergy granted her six shillings in the pound on all Church property. It is true that this Parliament objected to grant the supplies till some abuses in the exchequer and also in the conduct of the royal purveyors should be reformed, observing "that otherwise they were aware that they should be dissolved as soon as they had passed the Bill for the subsidies." The queen took umbrage at the measures under consideration. Burleigh told the House "that her majesty disliked the Bills." On which a committee of the Commons, with the Speaker, waited upon her with palliative apologies and professions of loyal affection, under which Elizabeth plainly detected an intention of carrying the matter through, and with unconstitutional haughtiness told them "that the regulations of her household and revenues belonged only to herself; that she had as much skill and power to rule and govern them as her subjects had to rule and govern theirs without the aid of their neighbours, but that out of her lovingkindness to her people, who were dearer to her than herself, she had taken steps for the correction of these abuses."

If Mary Stuart had not been removed, it is plain that Elizabeth would not have ventured either to interfere with the business before the House or to speak of the free realm of England as if it had been her personal estate, and her jurisdiction over it subject to no restraining influence from the representatives of the people. Elizabeth was at this period so secure of the strength of her position that she felt she could not only *do* as she pleased, but say *what* she pleased; the more dangerous indulgence of the royal will of the two.

On March 29th this Parliament was dissolved, preparatory to the arraignment of the Earl of Arundel in Westminster Hall before a select number of peers and privy councillors, appointed by Elizabeth for his trial, if such it may be termed, after five years' imprisonment in the Tower. The heads of his impeachment were "that he had maintained a correspondence with Cardinal Allen; that he had attempted to withdraw privily from the realm; that he was privy to Pope Sixtus's bull against the

queen ; and that he had caused a mass to be said in his prison for the success of the Spanish Armada, and had even composed a special prayer himself on that occasion."

The noble prisoner, pale and emaciated with sickness and long confinement, was brought into court by Sir Owen Hopton, the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Drue Drury, and others, the axe being carried before him. He made two obeisances when he presented himself at the bar. There the clerk of the court told him he was indicted of several offences, and said, "Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, late of Arundel, in the county of Sussex, hold up thy hand." He held up his hand very high, saying, "Here is as true a man's heart and hand as ever came into this hall."

The witnesses against Arundel were Bennet, the priest who had said the mass at his request, and Gerard and Shelley, who were present at it. These accused him of having offered up his prayers for the success of the expedition. Arundel declared "that his prayers were only for the preservation of himself and his fellow-Catholics from the general massacre to which report had said they were doomed in the event of the Spaniards effecting a landing ;" then, fixing his eyes upon Gerard, and adjuring him "to speak nothing but the truth, as he must one day appear before the tribunal of the living God to answer for what he should then say," he so daunted and disconcerted the witness that he lost his utterance, and was unable to repeat his first assertion.

Yet every one of the lords commissioners appointed for the trial of this ill-treated nobleman, when asked to give their verdict, placed his hand upon his breast, and said, "Guilty, upon my honour !" Then the Earl of Derby, who was special high steward of the court, pronounced the barbarous and ignominious sentence decreed by the laws of England against traitors, with all its revolting minutiae.

"*Fiat voluntas Dei*," responded the noble prisoner in a low voice ; and, making an obeisance, not to the packed junta, who had for the most part assisted in sending his father to the block, but to the throne, he was led out of court, with the edge of the axe towards him. He petitioned the queen, after his sentence

was pronounced, to be permitted to see his wife and son, a child of five years old, whom he had never seen. No answer was returned to his piteous supplication by Elizabeth, whose hatred to Lady Arundel was deadly and implacable, even amounting to a repugnance to breathing the same air with her, since whenever she was going to take up her abode at St. James's Palace, she invariably sent her commands to Lady Arundel to leave London.

The regard manifested for Arundel by the hapless Queen of Scots was probably the head and front of his offending. Elizabeth, after all, did not take his life. She had never ceased to upbraid Burleigh with having by his ceaseless importunity induced her to shed his father's blood—that blood which was kindred with her own—and she could scarcely have forgotten that this unfortunate peer was the grandson and representative of an Earl of Arundel to whose generous protection she was, in all probability, indebted for the perservation of her life when herself a persecuted captive in the Tower. Her relentings on this point could scarcely be termed mercy, for she kept the axe suspended over the expecting victim for the residue of his wretched existence, so that every day he was in a state of suspense, expecting to receive a summons to the scaffold at an hour's notice. He was never permitted to behold again his devoted wife or the unknown son for whom his fond heart had yearned in his lonely prison-house with the strong instinct of paternal love. In this long-lingering bitterness of death Elizabeth was so pitiless as to keep her unhappy kinsman for upwards of six years, till sickness, brought on by pining sorrow, combined with want of air and exercise, terminated his life.

The national spirit of England had been so fiercely roused by the threatened invasion of the Armada that nothing less than some attempt at retaliation would satisfy the people. Don Antonio, titular King of Portugal, was still a suppliant at the Court of Elizabeth for assistance from her to establish him on the throne of his ancestors, and the last prayer of Parliament to the queen before its dissolution was, that she would send an expedition to make reprisals on the King of Spain for his hostilities. Elizabeth liked the policy, but not the cost of such a

measure. She said "she was too poor to bear the burden herself, but her brave subjects were welcome to fit out an armament for the liberation of Portugal from the Spanish yoke, provided they would do it at their own expense, and she would lend them ships of war."

Drake, Norris, and other valiantly disposed gentlemen took her majesty at her word, and formed an association for this purpose. Elizabeth subscribed six thousand pounds towards the adventure, and on April 18th, 1589, a gallant armament sailed from Plymouth for Lisbon, having on board the claimant of the crown of Portugal and many noble young English volunteers, who were eager to assist in humbling the pride of Spain. To these ardent aspirants for glory was unexpectedly added the queen's reigning favourite, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, who had made his escape from Court, and, unknown to his royal mistress, put to sea in a ship of war called the *Swiftsure*, and joined the fleet while it was detained by contrary winds. Two years before the young earl had, in like manner, stolen from the silken fetters of his Courtly servitude, with the intention of signalising himself by relieving the town of Sluys, which was at that time besieged by the Spanish forces ; but the queen sent his young kinsman, Robert Carey, after him, to forbid his voyage. Carey overtook him at Sandwich, and with much difficulty prevailed upon him to return. It is doubtful whether the proffer of the crown matrimonial of England would have induced Essex to have given up his present enterprise, so thoroughly transported was he with the desire of playing the knight-errant on this occasion.

As soon as Elizabeth discovered the flight of her wilful favourite, she despatched the Earl of Huntingdon, with all speed, to follow, and bring the truant back, but he was already out of the reach of pursuit. He was the foremost man to leave the boats and struggle through the opposing breakers to the attack of the Castle of Peniche, and, wading up to the shoulders, first reached the land. The castle presently surrendered to the English adventurers, and Sir Henry Norris advanced so far as to take the suburbs of Lisbon, but for want of the promised co-operation of the King of Morocco, and indeed of the Portuguese themselves,

who probably liked not the prospect of such an alliance, and, above all, on account of the deficiency of the munitions of war in their own fleet, they were unable to follow up the brilliant successes with which they commenced the campaign. Essex, with all the ardour of a young chivalric novice, burning to perform deeds of high emprise, advanced to the gates of Lisbon, and beating a thundering summons there, challenged the governor to come forth and encounter him hand to hand in single combat. No notice was, of course, taken of this romantic defiance by the Spaniard.

Sickness broke out in the English army, and a fearful mortality ensued. Six thousand out of eighteen thousand were left on that ill-omened coast, victims to the pestilence, and the fleet returned to Plymouth without effecting anything compensatory for the loss of valuable lives it had involved. Elizabeth has been severely blamed for allowing the expedition to be undertaken at all, unless provided with the means of maintaining the honour of England. She had not yet learned wisdom on that point, although the experience of all her foreign expeditions had proved that she should have counted the costs of her warfare at first, and, if she thought them too high, pursued a more pacific policy. But half-measures always prove in the end dear economy, and Elizabeth was exactly the person "to spoil the ship for a half-penny-worth of tar."

Essex, having absented himself for several months from his duties as Master of the Horse, which office involved constant personal attendance on the queen, dreaded that some signal mark of her displeasure would be directed against him on his return. Nothing, indeed, less than fine and imprisonment could be anticipated, after the severe punishment that had been inflicted on the ill-fated Earl of Arundel for the contempt of essaying to leave England without the royal permission. Essex was, however, a privileged man, and the queen was so overjoyed at his return that, instead of chastising, she loaded her beloved truant with favours and caresses, and consoled him by some valuable grants for his disappointment on learning that Sir Christopher Hatton had been preferred to the vacant Chancellorship of Cambridge in

his absence. Essex was naturally of a generous, careless temper, but his personal extravagance had already involved him in debts to so large an amount that he found himself in a manner necessitated to avail himself of the weakness of his royal mistress by obtaining from her, as his predecessor, Leicester, had done, a plurality of lucrative places and monopolies. It was one of the great inconsistencies of Elizabeth's character that while she was parsimonious even to childishness, in matters of such vital importance to the honour of England as the victualling and supplying fleets that were to be employed either on foreign service or the defence of her realm with a needful quantity of ammunition, she lavished her bounty with unsparing profusion on the selfish succession of favourites who surrounded the throne, and, like the allegorical daughters of the horse-leech, were never tired of crying, "Give, give!"

Burleigh, who had fancied that the death of his ancient rival, Leicester, would have left him the undisputed lord of the ascendant in the council-chamber, was bitterly annoyed at finding himself circumvented and defeated in the royal closet by the influence his late ward had acquired over the mind of the queen, who was thirty-three years his senior. The courtiers, both old and young, regarded with jealous eyes the favoured Essex, who was then in the zenith of his power and influence with the queen. To what fatal heights, both for herself and him, the infatuation of such a princess might have elevated the object of her last and most engrossing passion may be imagined if he had been of a disposition to humour her infatuation. But Essex, in the first generous pride of manhood, had not yet lost that delicacy of feeling which forms the poetry of early life, ere the bright impulses of love and chivalry are choked by worldcraft and its degrading ends and aims. He would at that time have thought foul scorn of himself had he been capable of sacrificing the pure and holy sympathies of conjugal affection on the sordid altar of ambition or avarice. Well had it been for Essex if he had never condescended to barter his happiness as a husband and father for the glittering trammels in which he finally suffered himself to be entangled.

While, however, all the courtiers were burning with envy at the undisguised marks of fondness which the queen publicly lavished on her youthful favourite, he secretly loved and was beloved by the fair widow of Sir Philip Sidney. This lady was the only daughter of that celebrated statesman, Sir Francis Walsingham, who was just dead, worn out with his long and arduous official labours, and having spent his fortune in the service of the queen. Sir Philip Sidney had been the model on which Essex had endeavoured to form his own character ; and much that was noble, generous, and of fair promise in him may be perhaps attributed to his imitation of that stainless knight, while his faults were, after all, less than might have been expected from the pupil of Leicester. When Essex discovered that he and he alone had the power of consoling Lady Sidney for the loss of the hero for whom she had mourned upwards of four years, he did not hesitate to dry her tears by plighting himself to her in marriage, though at the risk of forfeiting the favour of his enamoured queen.

These nuptials were solemnised with great secrecy ; for though Essex was disinterested enough to wed the woman of his heart, he had not the moral courage to avow to his royal mistress what he had dared to do.

The paroxysms of rage with which Elizabeth was transported when the tidings at last reached her may be imagined from the hints which John Stanhope, one of the gentlemen of the privy chamber, conveys to Lord Talbot of her demeanour soon after :

"If," says he, "she could overcome her passion against my Lord of Essex for his marriage, no doubt she would be much the quieter ; yet doth she use it more temperately than was thought for, and, God be thanked, doth not strike *all* she threats. The earl doth use it with good temper, concealing his marriage as much as so open a matter may be ; not that he denies it to any, but for her majesty's better satisfaction is pleased that my lady shall live very retired in her mother's house."

The important movements of the political game which, in consequence of the changes that had followed the assassination of Henry III. of France, was playing for the crown of that realm

between her old antagonist, Philip of Spain, and her favourite *protégé*, Henry of Navarre, the hero of the Protestant cause, roused Elizabeth from the feminine weakness of amusing her courtiers with her irascibility on account of the marriage of her youthful favourite. She felt the proud importance of her position in the contest, and that she could with one hand raise the drooping fortunes of the gallant Bourbon from the dust, and with the other inflict a death-blow on the overweening pride of Spain. Henry of Navarre wooed her for succour in the tone of a lover ; she was, in fact, his only hope, and she came forward to his assistance like a true friend in the hour of his utmost need. The sum of two-and-twenty thousand pounds in gold, which she sent to him, arrived at the moment when his Swiss and German auxiliaries were about to disband for want of pay, and Henry, with a burst of surprise and joy at the sight of the money, declared "that he had never before beheld so large a sum in gold in his life."

Elizabeth further honoured her royal *protégé* by embroidering a scarf for him with her own hands, and using every demonstration of affectionate regard for his person. She led his envoys into her privy chamber to display his portrait, which she pronounced to be beautiful, with such expressions of admiration that they assured her she would like the original better, adding some insinuations which were far from offending her ; and they recommended their royal master to cultivate her good-will by writing a flattering note to her at least once a fortnight. Elizabeth levied three thousand men to send to his assistance. Essex threw himself at her feet, and implored her to honour him with the command of those troops. Elizabeth positively refused, though, with the importunity of a spoiled child, he remained kneeling before her for hours.

She prudently conferred the trust on her old, experienced commander, Sir John Norris. When Henry IV. solicited a further reinforcement, he requested his good sister that she would give the command to her gallant young master of the horse. Elizabeth reluctantly complied, and wrote a very remarkable letter to Henry on the subject—a letter which is worthy of attention,

both as the only one in which she dwells on the peculiar characteristics of Essex, and also from the endearing yet dignified manner in which she bespeaks the loving care of her ally for her soldiers. It is certainly one of the most interesting and sensible letters ever penned by this great sovereign :

QUEEN ELIZABETH TO HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.

“ 27th July, 1591.

“ According to the promise which I have always kept in your behalf, my dearest brother, I send four thousand men to your aid, with a lieutenant who appears to me very competent. His quality and the place he holds about me are such that it is not customary to permit him to be absent from me ; but all these reasons I have forgotten on the present occasion, preferring to our own necessity and convenience the gratification of your wish ; for which cause, I doubt not, you will respond with an honourable and careful respect for your greatness by giving him a favourable reception. In regard to his many merits, you may be assured, if (which most I fear) the rashness of his youth does not make him too precipitate, you will never have cause to doubt his boldness in your service, for he has given too frequent proofs that he regards no peril, be it what it may ; and you are entreated to bear in mind that he is too impetuous to be given the reins.

“ But, my God, how can I dream of making any reasonable requests to you, seeing you are so careless of your own life : I must appear a very foolish creature. Only I repeat to you that he will require the bridle rather than the spur. Nevertheless, I hope he will be found to possess skill enough to lead his troops on to do you worthy service ; and I dare promise that our subjects are so well disposed, and have hearts so valiant, that they will serve you to ruin all your foes, if their good fortune corresponds with their desires. And now for the wages of all these forces, I must make you two requests : the first, on which depends their lives, your heart being such that nothing ought to be omitted that regards them, that you will cherish them, not as those who serve as mercenaries, but freely from good affection ; also, that you will not carry them into too great danger. You are so wise a prince that I am assured you will not forget that our two nations have not often accorded so well, but they would remember their ancient quarrels, not considering themselves of the same country, but separated by a mighty deep ; and that you will so bear it in hand that no inconveniences shall arise when they arrive. I have, on my part, inculcated good lessons on my people, which, I am assured, they will observe.

“ And now, not to fatigue you with too long a letter, I will conclude with this advice : that in approaching our coasts you would not forget to *debouche* the way to Parma, in all directions where he might enter, for I am assured that he has received orders to press towards the Low Countries rather than to France.

“ Your very assured good sister and cousin,

“ E. R.”

In this last hint Elizabeth's policy in sending her troops to the aid of Henry is explained. She had conditioned that her people were not to be employed in the contest between the Huguenot King of France and his malcontent Catholic subjects, but only against the Spanish invaders, who had entered Bretagne, and were rather alarming neighbours to England. Henry violated his pact on this point by directing the English troops against his rebel subjects, in order to obtain by force of arms his recognition as sovereign of France, making all other considerations subservient to that leading object. Elizabeth remonstrated in vain, and at last her patience failed her ; and in reply to some contumacious expressions from Henry IV., she addressed the following indignant language to him :—

“ I am astonished that any one who is so much beholden to us for aid in his need should pay his most assured friend in such base coin. Can you imagine that the softness of my sex deprives me of the courage to resent a public affront ? The royal blood I boast could not brook from the mightiest prince in Christendom such treatment as you have, within the last three months, offered to me. Be not displeased if I tell you roundly that if thus you treat your friends, who freely and from pure affection are serving you at a most important time, they will fail you hereafter at your greatest need. I would instantly have withdrawn my troops, had it not appeared to me that your ruin would have been the result, if the others, led by my example, and apprehending similar treatment, should desert you. This consideration induces me to allow them to remain a little longer, blushing, meantime, that I am made to the world the spectacle of a despised princess.

“ I beseech the Creator to inspire you with a better way of preserving your friends.

“ Your sister, who merits better treatment than she has had,
“ E. R.”

Henry knew how to soften by seductive flattery the wrath of the royal lioness, by whom his cause had been supported when he had no other friend, and he always kept on the most agreeable terms with the brave and generous Essex. If the talents of Essex had been equal to his chivalry, he would have won the most brilliant reputation in Europe ; but his achievements were confined to personal acts of valour, which procured him in the French camp the name of the English Achilles.

“ The old fox,” as Essex always called his former guardian, Burleigh, had done the utmost to widen the breach between him

and the queen, and he now made all the advantage he could of his absence by incessantly entreating her majesty to give the place of Secretary of State to his son, Robert Cecil. Essex was the warm friend and patron of Davison, whose cause he was continually pleading to the queen, and had by his powerful influence kept his office vacant, in spite of the veteran premier's pertinacious solicitations to her majesty to bestow it on his own son.

On July 19th Elizabeth honoured Burleigh with a visit at his house in the Strand, and they went together to take a private view of the house of the absent Essex in Covent Garden, a proceeding that had somewhat the appearance of an impertinent piece of espionage. It was probably during this visit that Sir Robert Cecil obtained his long-delayed preferment to the place of Secretary of State; for on August 2nd he was sworn of the privy council at Nonsuch. Sir Robert Cecil had deeply studied all the weak points of his royal mistress's character, and endeavoured, by flattering her to the top of her bent, to render himself so acceptable to her that his personal defects might be overlooked. It is just possible that that mighty observer of the human heart in all its erratic movements, Shakespeare, had the deformed secretary, Cecil, in his thoughts when, in defiance of historic truth, he made his royal hunchback, Richard III., prevail with the Lady Anne through the magic of his seductive flattery. It was with that potent weapon that Sir Robert Cecil presumed to enter the lists with the handsome, gallant, and manly Earls of Cumberland and Essex, with Mountjoye, with Carey, and with Raleigh for the favour of the dainty queen, who certainly regarded ugliness as a greater sin than witchcraft. She was, however, amused at the idea of her new secretary affecting the airs of a lover in the privy chamber.

The same autumn died the Lord Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton. Hatton lived long enough to experience the fickleness of royal regard, although he was the only one of Elizabeth's especial favourites who was dutiful enough to remain a bachelor to please his liege lady. His death has been generally attributed to the harsh manner in which Queen Elizabeth enforced the payment of a Crown debt in the season of his declining health.

The insinuation that it was regarded in the light of a default distressed his mind so deeply that he took to his bed. When the queen was informed of the effects of her unkindness, she was touched with compunction for what she had done, and came to visit him, endeavouring by the most gracious behaviour and soothing words to console him. She even carried her condescension so far as to administer a posset to him with her own hands ; but there are some wounds which no flattering balms can heal. The royal attentions came too late to revive the dying chancellor—his heart was broken.

Elizabeth, meantime, who had not yet forgiven Essex for his marriage, hearing that he was a candidate for the Chancellorship of Oxford, which became vacant at the death of Hatton, ordered the university to chose the rival candidate, Lord Buckhurst. Essex was deeply mortified, and being then engaged at the siege of Rouen, wrote to one of his friends at home : “ If I die in the assault, pity me not, for I shall die with more pleasure than I live with ; if I escape, comfort me not, for the queen’s wrong and unkindness is too great.”

When the King of France sent Du Plessis de Mornay to request more troops of Elizabeth, and something was said by the ambassador implying that the Earl of Essex was favourable to his master’s wish, she flamed into open anger, used the most bitter expressions against her offending favourite, and finished by saying “ that the Earl of Essex would have it thought that he ruled her realm ; but that nothing was more untrue, that she would make him the most pitiful fellow in her realm ; and instead of sending the King of France more troops, she would recall all those she had lent him.”

The astonished envoy found he had committed a desperate blunder, and endeavoured by a complimentary speech to appease the storm he had unwittingly raised ; but Elizabeth not being in a humour to listen calmly, rose up abruptly, declared herself very much indisposed, and told him she was compelled on that account to cut short the audience. Du Plessis then offered to present her with a memorial which he had previously prepared ; but she haughtily bade him give it to her Lord Treasurer, and

swept out of the room. She well knew that she was in a position to assume the airs of a paramount sovereign to Henry of Navarre at that moment, and the angry feelings the name of Essex had excited were without ceremony vented on his ambassador.

Elizabeth's anger against Essex, though imperiously and offensively expressed, was neither more nor less than the feverish irritability of the deep-seated passion which neither pride, reason, nor the absence of the object of it could subdue. She menaced and reviled him, while she loved him and eagerly desired his presence. When she heard how much he exposed his person in battle, her affection took the alarm ; but as soon as the news reached her that his brother Walter was slain she wrote to remand Essex home.

Much annoyed at this order, Essex sent Sir Thomas Darcy to assure her majesty that if he withdrew at such a season he should be covered with dishonour. He had already been reproached by the besieged with cowardice for having failed to avenge his brother's death ; whereupon he sent Villars, the Governor of Rouen, a challenge "to meet him on horse or foot, and by personal encounter to decide which was the better man, fought in the better cause, or served the fairest mistress." Villars declined the combat in very uncourteous terms, and added, with a sneer, "that as to the beauty of their mistresses, it was scarcely worth his while to put himself to much trouble about that,"—a remark that was evidently intended to indicate his contempt for the *long-established* claims of her majesty of England to be treated as a beauty : indeed, as Elizabeth was fast approaching her sixtieth year, the less that was said by her friends of her charms, the better it would have been.

Soon after, the town of Gornye surrendered to the united arms of France and England, and Essex sent Sir Robert Carey home with letters to the queen announcing the news, and entreating further leave of absence, that this great success might be followed up. Before the arrival of Carey, however, the queen, who could not brook the slightest opposition to her commands, had sent Darcy back, with a peremptory order to the earl to return without delay, as he would answer it at his utmost peril, with

commission from her to Sir Thomas Layton to take the command of his troops. So peremptory was the mandate that Essex dared not hesitate, and, resigning his command to Sir Thomas Layton, and putting himself into a little skiff at Dieppe, made all the haste he could to England. The earl, who expected to be received with an outburst of royal fury on his return, found himself pleasantly mistaken, for her majesty, charmed with his unlooked-for obedience to her summons, used him with such grace and favour that he stayed a week with her, passing the time in jollity and feasting; and when the time of parting came, she, with tears in her eyes, manifested her affection to him, and for repair of his honour gave him leave to return to his charge again.

This reconciliation between Essex and the queen took place in April, 1592.

CHAPTER XI

Favouritism of Essex—Queen violates the privileges of Parliament—

Her severe letter to Henry IV. on his change of creed—Her theological studies—Translates Boethius—Supposed plot against her life by Lopez—Her persecution of the Puritans—Gossip and intrigues—Her rage at Raleigh's marriage—Her parsimony and abridgment of naval and military supplies—Quarrels with Essex—Essex's expedition to Spain—His loving letter to the queen—Growing influence of the Lord Admiral—She creates him Earl of Nottingham—Essex's discontent—She makes him Earl Marshal—Dispute in council between the queen and Essex—She boxes his ears—His petulant behaviour and menace—He retires from Court—Sickness and death of Burleigh—Elizabeth's grief.

A NEW era in the personal history of Queen Elizabeth commences with the return of the Earl of Essex from his French campaigns in 1592-3. She welcomed him with undisguised delight, and lavished favours and distinctions upon him with profuse liberality. He returned an altered man; the delicacy and refinement of youthful honour had given place to sentiments more in unison with the wisdom of the children of this world.

His residence in the sprightly camp of the gay and amorous King of France had unfitted him for the duties of domestic life and accomplished him in all the arts of courtly flattery and dissipation. Lady Essex, the wife of his choice, was neglected and kept in the background, while he affected to become the lover of a princess three-and-thirty years older than himself, as the surest method of rivalling his political adversaries, the Cecils and Raleigh. He was soon recognised as the head of a rival party—a party that cherished more enlightened views and sentiments in greater accordance with the progress of education in a civilised country than the iron rule of Burleigh or the inquisitorial policy of the late secretary, Walsingham. England had, indeed, been delivered from foreign foes, and civil strife had been kept down by the terror of the halter and quartering knife, but the oppressive statutes to compel uniformity of worship were borne with irritation and impatience by Catholics and Puritans alike, and the latter party were beginning to evince a determination to seek redress.

The queen had now governed four years without the aid of a Parliament, but in the beginning of the year 1593 the exhausted state of her finances compelled her to summon a new one. It assembled February 19th, on which occasion her majesty, abandoning the character of a popular sovereign, assumed a tone of absolute despotism, and told the members, by her new Chancellor, Puckering, “that they were not called together to make new laws, or lose good hours in idle speeches, but to vote a supply to enable her majesty to defend her realm against the hostile attempts of the King of Spain.” This was a bold beginning, but she followed it up when, on the election of the new Speaker, the Commons making their usual request of freedom from arrest, liberty of speech, and access to her person, she replied, “that their first prayer was granted, with this qualification, that wit and speech were calculated to do harm, and their liberty of speech extended no further than ‘ay’ or ‘no,’ and that if any idle heads hazarded their estates by meddling with Church and State, the Speaker should not receive their Bills.” The petition of freedom from arrest was granted, with this proviso, “that it was not to cover any man’s ill-doings. As for the privilege of access to her presence, that

was wholly to depend on the importance of the occasion and her majesty's leisure." It is conjectured, from the menacing tone of the royal replies, that Elizabeth had reason to suspect the nature of the subjects likely to be discussed by this Parliament. In fact, the first thing it did was to frame a petition requesting her majesty to settle the succession. The queen followed up her despotic intimation without delay by committing Wentworth, with whom the motion originated, to the Tower, also Sir Thomas Bromley, who seconded him, and the two members who drew up the petition, to the Fleet.

Soon after, James Morris, a bold and zealous Puritan law officer, attempted to introduce two Bills for the redress of the abuses in the ecclesiastical courts and for ameliorating the penal statutes. Several members seconded his motion, but the queen put a sudden end to the discussion by sending in great wrath for the Speaker, Sir Edward Coke, and told him "to inform the Commons that Parliaments were the creatures of her will, to summon or dissolve them—to nullify or give effect to their decisions according to her pleasure, that she was indignant at their presumption, and, once for all, forbade the exhibition of any Bills touching the reformation of matters of Church or State, and commanded him on his allegiance, if such were introduced, to refuse to read them." She then sent a serjeant-at-arms into the House of Commons, who arrested Morris in his place, in her majesty's name, and carried him off to Tutbury Castle. He had, however, a powerful friend in the Earl of Essex, to whose intercessions he probably owed his liberty; but when that nobleman, who highly appreciated both his legal talents and his integrity, ventured to recommend him to the queen for the vacant place of Attorney-General, her majesty acknowledged his talents, but said "his speaking against her in the manner he had done should be a bar against any preferment at her hands."

The Commons, having been thus schooled and intimidated, kissed the rod and passed a most unconstitutional Bill, framed and sent down to them by the sovereign herself, "for keeping her majesty's subjects in better obedience." They also granted her two subsidies and three fifteenths. This was not enough to satisfy the

royal expectations. Three subsidies and six-fifteenths were demanded by Sir Robert Cecil, and, notwithstanding some few objections, were obtained. The queen was so incensed at the opposition of Sir Edward Hoby to the grant that she imprisoned him till the end of the sessions. Elizabeth dismissed this Parliament in person on April 10th, 1593, in a speech which the boldest man of the Plantagenet line of monarchs would scarcely have ventured to utter, and from the lips of a female sovereign it must have had a startling effect on an English senate, even in the days of the last of the Tudors.

After reflecting in bitter terms on the attempts at opposition to her will, and reiterating the haughty language she had used during the sessions, she spoke of the menaced invasion of the King of Spain with lofty contempt, and concluded by saying, "I am informed that when he attempted this last measure, some upon the sea-coast forsook their towns, and fled up higher into the country, leaving all naked and exposed to his entrance. But I swear unto you, by God, if I knew those persons, or may know them hereafter, I will make them know what it is to be fearful in so urgent a cause."

Francis Bacon, whose splendid talents were then beginning to manifest themselves, had, with his brother Anthony, incurred the displeasure of the queen and the political animosity of the two Cecils by speaking on the popular side in this Parliament. Essex indicated his sentiments on the subject by interceding for them with her majesty, and recommending them for office, and when she petulantly refused to avail herself of their learning and talents in any department of her Government, because of the opposition they had presumed to offer to the unconstitutional measures of her ministers, he boldly received them into his own family as secretaries to himself. If any other nobleman had ventured to do such a thing, a Star Chamber prosecution and fine would have followed, but Essex was a privileged person. What might he not have done at that moment, when he was at once the darling of the people and the beloved of the queen! A noble field lay open to him—a field in which he might have won a brighter meed of fame than the bloodstained laurels of a military

conqueror, if he had chosen to act the part of a true patriot by standing forth as the courageous advocate of the laws and liberties of his country. It was in his power to become a moderator between all parties. Elizabeth, childless, and descending into the vale of years, yet full of energy and love for her people, had been rendered the instrument of the selfish policy of a junta whose great aim was to establish an arbitrary Government before which even the peers and senate of England should crouch in slavish submission.

Her good sense and great regnal talents inclined her in the first instance to a more popular system of government, and the influence of one conscientious and enlightened counsellor might, perhaps, have induced her to finish her reign gloriously by leaving the legacy of a free Constitution to England. Essex had neither the moral courage nor the integrity of mind to risk the loss of the easy and lucrative post of a royal favourite by becoming the open leader of an opposition to the Cecil administration. He thoroughly hated both father and son, and omitted no opportunity of undermining their credit with the sovereign and traversing their measures ; but when he might have attacked them boldly and successfully on the ground of public grievances, he was silent, lest he should incur the displeasure of the queen. As a holder of patents and monopolies, Essex had much to lose, and a double-minded man is, of course, unstable in all his ways.

When Elizabeth learned that Henry IV. of France was about to abjure the Protestant faith and profess himself a convert to the Church of Rome, she was greatly offended and displeased, and in great haste despatched Sir Thomas Wylkes to remonstrate with him in her name ; but before the arrival of her envoy the deed was done, and Henry directed his ambassador, Morlant, to soften the matter to Elizabeth as much as he could by alleging the urgent motives of State necessity for the change he had been induced to make.

Elizabeth would not listen with common patience to the excuses that were offered, but in a transport of indignation penned the following reproachful letter to the royal renegade :—

TO THE KING OF FRANCE.

"Nov. 12, 1593.

"Ah, what grief! ah, what regret! ah, what pangs have seized my heart at the news which Morlant has communicated! My God! is it possible that any worldly consideration could render you regardless of the divine displeasure? Can we reasonably expect any good result can follow such an iniquity? How could you imagine that He whose hand has supported and upheld your cause so long would fail you at your need? It is a perilous thing to do ill that good may come of it! Nevertheless, I yet hope your better feelings may return, and in the meantime I promise to give you the first place in my prayers, that Esau's hands may not defile the blessing of Jacob. The friendship and fidelity you promise to me, I own I have dearly earned; but of that I should never have repented if you had not abandoned your Father. I cannot now regard myself as your sister, for I always prefer that which is natural to that which is adopted, as God best knows, whom I beseech to guard and keep you in the right way, with better feelings.

"Your sister, if it be after the old fashion: with the new I will have nothing to do.

"E. R."

When Elizabeth sent this severe rebuke to Henry of Navarre, she must either have had a very short memory herself, or imagined that her politic brother had forgotten her former dissimulation in conforming to the Catholic mode of worship not only during the last years of her sister's reign, when she was, of course, actuated by fear, but during the first six weeks of her own. She was, however, so greatly troubled at the apostasy of her *protégé* that to divert her grief she entered into a course of theological studies, collating the writings of the ancient fathers with the Scriptures. She had several conferences with the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject, and finally composed her mind by reading *Boethius on the Consolations of Philosophy*, of the five first books of which she made a very elegant English translation.

About the same juncture a plot against the life of Queen Elizabeth was detected by the vigilance of Essex, who, through the connexion of his secretary, Anthony Bacon, with the underlings of the Spanish Cabinet, had received a hint that Ibarra, the new Governor of the Netherlands, had suborned her Jew physician, Lopez, to mingle poison in her medicine. This man, who enjoyed a very high degree of her majesty's confidence, was a

Spanish subject, had been taken prisoner in 1558, and had ever since been retained in the queen's service on account of his professional skill, but was secretly a spy and pensioner of the King of Spain. Elizabeth would not believe the charge, because Dr. Lopez had presented to her a rich jewel which Ibarra had sent to him as a bribe. Essex insisted that this was only a proof of his art, and the queen at length allowed him, in conjunction with the Cecils, to make an investigation. They proceeded to the house of Lopez, and after searching his papers and cross-examining him, both Burleigh and his son expressed their conviction that it was a false accusation. On which the queen, sending for Essex in a passion, and calling him "a rash, temerarious youth," sharply reprimanded him for bringing, on slight grounds, so heinous a suspicion on an innocent man. Essex left the royal presence in sullen displeasure, and shut himself up in his chamber, which he refused to quit till the queen had, by many coaxing messages and apologies, appeased his offended pride.

Essex, however, had serious cause for believing his information well grounded, as it was derived from Antonio Perez, the refugee secretary of Philip II., and on further investigation he obtained such evidence of the fact as the confessions of two Portuguese confederates of Lopez, Louis and Ferreira, furnished. Ferreira swore "that by direction of Lopez he had written a letter to Ibarra and Fuentes, offering to poison the queen for fifty thousand crowns ;" and Louis, "that he had been employed by the same authorities to urge Lopez to perform his promise." There were also letters intercepted which proved a plot to set fire to the English fleet.

When Elizabeth was at length convinced of the reality of the peril from which she had so narrowly escaped, a pious sentiment was called forth indicative of her reliance on the Supreme Ruler of the issues of life and death. "O Lord, thou art my God," she exclaimed, "my times are in Thy hand."

Lopez acknowledged having carried on a secret correspondence with the Spanish Court, but steadily denied having cherished any evil designs against his royal mistress. He suffered death for the suspicion he had incurred, and on the scaffold declared "that

he loved the queen as well as he did Jesus Christ," an assertion that was received with a shout of derision by the orthodox spectators of the tragedy, who considered it tantamount to a confession of his treason, as he was a Jew.

Elizabeth's aversion to the growing sect of the more rigid portion of her Protestant subjects, who eschewed surplice and liturgy, strengthened with the strength of that uncompromising body. She perceived that they disseminated republican doctrines in their three-hour-long sermons, and she knew that all the opposition she had ever experienced in the House of Commons proceeded from that party. "Thus," as Mrs. Jameson truly observes, "she was most impatient of preachers and preaching—she said, 'two or three were enough for a whole county.'" She appears in her arbitrary attempts to enforce uniformity of worship and to crush the Puritans to have been influenced by the same spirit which has led one of the statesmen-authors of the present times to declare "that the strength of the Dissenters is the weakness of the Crown." Such sentiments are the parents of intolerance; but the divine principles of Christian love and fellowship to all who confess the name of Christ were scarcely to be expected from the short-sighted policy of Elizabeth's ecclesiastical Government, which alienated the hearts of many a loyal subject and did violence to the consciences of good and pious men who could not take the royal edicts as their rule of faith.

As Elizabeth had dealt with Catholic recusants, so dealt she now with Puritans; opposed as they were in practice as well as opinions, the penal statute of the twenty-eighth of her reign was found capable of slaying both. Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry, three leaders of the Puritans, the last named of whom, under the quaint title of Martin Mar-prelate, had published some very bitter attacks on bishops, were executed, with many of their followers of less note, and the gaols were crowded with those who either could not or would not pay the fines in which they were mulcted for refusing to attend church.

Queen Elizabeth was engaged at her devotions in Greenwich church when she heard the distant report of the Archduke Albert's cannon thundering thick and fast on Calais, and, start-

ing up, she interrupted the service by issuing her royal command that a thousand men should be instantly impressed for the relief of the town. Her enthusiasm did not transport her into the romantic ardour of sending them without taking due advantage of Henry's necessity. Calais, which had been lost to England for nearly forty years, though its restoration under certain conditions had been deceitfully promised, might now be regained. She replied to Henry's earnest solicitations for assistance "that she would endeavour to deliver it from the Spanish siege on condition that it might be occupied by an English garrison." Henry, remembering that his good sister persisted in bearing the lilies in her royal escutcheon, and despite of the Salic Law, which had excluded so many princesses of the elder line of St. Louis from holding that dignity, she claimed the absurd title of Queen of France from the victorious Plantagenet monarchs, who regarded Calais as the key of that realm, declined her obliging proposal by his ambassador Sancy, who told her majesty frankly "that the king, his master, would rather see Calais in the hands of the Spaniards than those of the English." Henry himself facetiously observed, "If I am to be bitten, I would rather it were done by a lion than a lioness."

Notwithstanding this sharp witticism, some negotiations for succours were continued, and Elizabeth offered on certain conditions, tending to the same object, to raise 8000 men for Henry's relief. "By whom are they to be commanded?" inquired the monarch of Sir Anthony Mildmay, the new English ambassador. "By the Earl of Essex," replied the envoy. "Her majesty," rejoined Henry, with a sarcastic smile, "can never allow her cousin of Essex to be absent from her cotillon!" When Elizabeth was informed of this impertinent observation, she wrote a letter to Henry, containing but four lines, which so moved the fiery temper of the royal Gascon that he had scarcely made himself master of their import ere he raised his hand with intent to strike the ambassador by whom the letter was presented to him, but contented himself by ordering him to leave the room. "It is to be hoped that this characteristic *billet-doux* of the Tudor lioness will one day be brought to

light, as it would be far better worth the reading than her more elaborate epistles. The next time Henry sued for her assistance in recovering his good town of Calais, she refused to aid him in any other way than by her prayers.

The personal interference of Queen Elizabeth in restricting the supplies of ammunition and other requisites for her fleets and armies on foreign service continued to impede her ministers and officers entrusted with important commands. Sir Robert Sidney, the Governor of Flushing, was urgent for a supply of powder for the defence of that town. The queen at first positively refused to send any, as the States were under an agreement to furnish it. "‘But,’ said Rowland Whyte, who had preferred Sir Robert Sidney’s request, when Essex told him that the matter had been disputed before the queen, and she was pleased that five hundred pounds should be delivered for that purpose—‘but, my lord, there is no powder in the town, and what shall we do for powder while the States be resolving?’ To this Essex made answer ‘that he would acquaint her majesty with it, and that he earnestly dealt with her to deliver powder to be answered upon the soldiers’ general pay ; but she would not consent to it, but was content that it might be deducted out of their weekly lendings.’” In short, there were more demurs and debates on the outlay of five hundred pounds in a case of absolute necessity than would now take place on the sacrifice of five hundred thousand.

Sir Robert Sidney was tired of the difficult and onerous post he filled ; vexed and fettered as he was for want of the means of maintaining the honour of his country, he was, withal, homesick, and earnestly solicited leave of a few weeks’ absence to visit his wife and children. Elizabeth considered that he was a more efficient person than any one she could send in his place, and with no more regard for his feelings than she had formerly shown for those of Walsingham when she persisted in detaining him in France, she refused to accede to his wish. On the death, however, of Lord Huntingdon, the husband of Sir Robert Sidney’s aunt, who, refusing to make his will, left his wife in great difficulties, her majesty relented. She visited the afflicted widow,

who was Leicester's sister, to offer her personal consolation to her, and granted the long-delayed leave for the return of Sir Robert Sidney, that he might arrange her affairs. So great was the fear of Lady Sidney that the queen might afterwards deny her own act and deed, that she retained the royal letter in her own possession, for fear of accidents befalling it, and only sent a copy of it to her husband.

Elizabeth, while she bestowed a very reasonable degree of favour on her maternal kindred, always seems to have kept her own immediate connexion with the unfortunate and dishonoured name of Anne Boleyn in the shade. One day a person approached Queen Elizabeth with a petition under pretence of kindred. The queen was too wise to repel the audacious suitor with any degree of haughtiness, much less did she attempt to contest the claim, being well aware that a numerous class of second-rate gentry in Norfolk could prove relationship to her in no very distant degree through the Boleyns, but she briefly and wittily replied, "Friend, grant it may be so. Dost think I am bound to keep *all* my kindred? Why, that's the way to make *me* a beggar."

She never ennobled Sir Francis Knollys, the husband of her best-loved cousin, Katherine Carey, nor any of their children. Lord Hunsdon, her nearest male relation, enjoyed much of her confidence, and received many preferments, but she never advanced him to a higher rank in the peerage than a baron. Robert Carey, his youngest son, was a great favourite with her till he rashly committed the offence of wedding a fair and virtuous gentlewoman. When Elizabeth heard that Robert Carey had presumed to take to himself a wife, she manifested so much displeasure that the luckless bridegroom durst not make his appearance at Court even when his business most required it. At length, being weary of his banishment and the ill turn a vexatious law-suit in which he was engaged was likely to take, in consequence of his absence, he came and took lodgings very privately at Windsor, having heard that her majesty meant to have a great triumph there on her coronation day, and that signal preparations were making for the course of the field and the tourney. He then resolved to take a part in the games,

under the name and character of the "forsaken knight," and prepared a present for the queen, which, together with his trappings, cost him four hundred pounds.

"I was the forsaken knight," says he, "that had vowed solitariness, but, hearing of this great triumph, thought to honour my mistress with my best service, and then to return to my wonted mourning." The device did not, we may suppose, pass unnoticed by the queen, whose quick glance failed not to detect everything out of the common course, for nothing passed, whether abroad or at home, with which she was not acquainted. The theatrical nature of the character, and the submissive homage that was offered to her, were also well calculated to please her ; but as she had no immediate occasion for his services just then, she permitted the forsaken knight still to remain under the cloud of her displeasure.

A few days afterwards the King of Scotland sent word to Sir John Carey, the eldest brother of our knight, and Marshal of Berwick, that he had something of great importance to communicate to the Queen of England, with which he would not trust her ambassador, nor any one but himself, the Lord Hunsdon, or one of his sons. Sir John Carey sent the letter to his father, who communicated it to the queen, and asked her pleasure.

"She was not willing," says Sir Robert Carey, "that my brother should stir out of the town, but knowing, though she would not know, that I was in the Court, she said, 'I hear your fine son, that has lately married so worthily, is hereabouts ; send *him*, if you will, to know the king's pleasure.' My father answered 'that I would gladly obey her commands.' 'No,' said she, 'do you bid him go, for I have nothing to do with him.' My father came and told me what had passed. I thought it hard to be sent, without seeing her ; for my father told me plainly that she would neither speak with me nor see me.' 'Sir,' said I, 'if she be on such hard terms with me, I had need be wary what I do. If I go to the king without her especial licence, it were in her power to hang me on my return ; and, for anything I see- it were ill trusting her.' My father went merrily to the

queen, and told her what I said ; she answered, 'If the gentleman be so mistrustful, let the secretary make a safe conduct to go and come, and I will sign it.'

On these conditions young Carey, who proved himself on this occasion a genuine scion of the same determined and diplomatic stock from which his royal mistress was maternally descended, accepted the commission, and hastened into Scotland, passing, however, one night at Carlisle with his wife, her for whose sake he had incurred the displeasure of the queen. The secret communication the King of Scots was desirous of making to his good sister of England, Carey has not disclosed. At his desire a written, not a verbal, communication was addressed by King James to her majesty : "I had my dispatch," says he, "within four days, and made all the haste I could with it to Hampton Court, and arrived there on St. Stephen's Day, in the afternoon. Dirty as I was, I came into the presence, where I found the lords and ladies dancing. The queen was not there ; my father went to her to let her know that I was returned. She willed him to take my message or letters, and bring them to her."

The young diplomatist was, as before observed, one of her own blood, and not to be treated like an easy slipper, to be used for her convenience and then kicked into a corner with contempt as soon as her purpose was served. He boldly refused to send the letters by his father, telling him "that he would neither trust him nor any one else with what he had to deliver." The stout old lord, finding his son so determined, reported his audacity to the queen.

"With much ado," continues Carey, "I was called in, and I was left alone with her,—our first encounter was stormy and terrible, which I passed over with silence. After she had spoken her pleasure of me and *my wife*, I told her 'she herself was in fault for my marriage ; and that if she had but graced me with the least of her favours, I had never left her nor her Court ; and seeing she was the chief cause of my misfortunes, I would never off my knees till I had kissed her hand and obtained my pardon.' " She was not displeased with my excuse, and before we parted we grew good friends.

This stormy explosion and abuse of poor Carey and his wife actually took place before her majesty's curiosity was gratified by learning the mighty matter which her royal brother of Scotland was so eager to communicate, since, forgetting the dignity of the sovereign, she thought proper to give vent to her temper as a woman in the first instance. "Then," pursues Carey, "I delivered my message and my papers, which she took very well, and *at last* gave me thanks for the pains I had taken. So having her princely word that she had pardoned and forgotten all faults, I kissed her hand, and came forth to the presence (chamber), and was in the Court as I was before. Thus God did for me to bring me in favour with my sovereign, for if this occasion had been slipped, it may be I should never, never have seen her face more."

Sir Walter Raleigh was at this time under the cloud of the royal displeasure for having first seduced and afterwards committed what Elizabeth appeared to consider the greater crime, of marrying the fair mistress Elizabeth Throckmorton; one of her maids-of-honour, and the daughter of her faithful early friend Sir Nicholas Throckmorton.* The queen, who certainly imagined that it was a part of her prerogative, as a maiden queen, to keep every handsome gentleman of her Court in single blessedness, to render exclusive homage to her perennial charms, was transported with rage at the trespass of these rash lovers. She expelled the luckless bride of Raleigh from the Court with the greatest contumely, and committed the bridegroom to the Tower. Raleigh, who knew her majesty's temper, pretended to be overwhelmed with grief and despair, not at his separation from his young, beautiful, and loving wife, but because he was deprived of the sunshine of the royal presence.

One day he saw her majesty's barge on the Thames, and pretended to become frantic at the sight. "He suffered," he said, "all the horrors of Tantalus, and would go on that water to see his mistress." His keeper, Sir George Carew, interposed to prevent him as he was attempting to rush down a stone staircase that led from his window, and caught him by the collar.

* See Appendix, Note G. Sir Walter Raleigh's Marriage.

Raleigh, in the struggle, tore off his keeper's new periwig, and threatened to stick his dagger into him. After a desperate contest he was carried back to his chamber. The next time the queen was going on progress, he penned a most artful letter to his political ally, Sir Robert Cecil, on purpose to be shown to the queen: "How," he asks, "can I live alone in prison while she is afar off—I, who was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus—the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph. Sometimes sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometimes playing on the lute like Orpheus. But once amiss hath bereaved me of all." He then adds, "all those times are past, the loves, the sighs, the sorrows, the desires, can they not weigh down one frail misfortune?"

The gross flattery of this letter somewhat mollified the anger of the queen, and two months afterwards he obtained his release from durance, but was forbidden to come to Court or to resume the duties of his office as captain of the guard.

So jealous was Elizabeth lest foreign princes should obtain any of that homage and allegiance from her subjects which she esteemed her exclusive right that when two valiant young knights, Sir Nicholas Clifford and Sir Anthony Shirley, whom her good friend and ally, Henry IV. of France, had honoured with the Order of St. Michael for their chivalric deeds in his service, appeared in her Court decorated with the glittering insignia of the institution, she expressed the greatest displeasure that they should have dared to accept an honour from, and take an oath to, any other sovereign without her permission, and forthwith committed them both to prison. As a great favour, and because of their youth and inexperience, she did not proceed against them, but she compelled them to return the insignia of St. Michael, and to take measures for having their names struck out of the register of the order. When Henry was told of it, he only smiled, and said, "I could wish the Queen of England would do me the same favour, by making some of my aspiring subjects, whom she may chance to see in her realm, Knights of the Round Table," an order which her late vainglorious

favourite, Leicester, had made an ineffectual effort to revive, in honour of her majesty's visit to Kenilworth.

The queen had some time before given letters to Sir Thomas Arundel of Wardour recommending him to the service of the Emperor Rudolph II. as a brave knight and her kinsman ; and Arundel had so greatly distinguished himself in the defence of Hungary, where with his own hands he took a Turkish banner, that Rudolph conferred the dignity of a count of the Holy Roman Empire on the gallant volunteer. When Arundel returned to England, some dispute arising between him and the English peers as to whether he had any right to claim rank or precedence in this country from his foreign title, the matter was referred to her majesty, who replied "that there was a close tie of affection between sovereigns and their subjects ; and as chaste wives should have no eyes but for their husbands, so faithful liegemen should keep their regards at home, and not look after foreign crowns. That for her part she liked not for her sheep to wear a stranger's mark, nor to dance after a foreigner's whistle."

From a letter written by Camden, the historian, to Sir Robert Cotton, it appears that Queen Elizabeth was attacked with a dangerous illness this spring. "I know you are," says he, "as we all here have been, in a melancholy and pensive cogitation. This sleepless indisposition of her majesty is now ceased, which, being joined with an inflammation from the breast upward, and her mind altogether averted from physic in this her climacterical year, did more than terrify us all, especially the last Friday, in the morning, which moved the lords of the council, when they had providently caused all the vagrants hereabouts to be taken up and shipped for the Low Countries." Other precautions for the defence of the realm are mentioned, which looks as if a foreign invasion were dreaded ; and it is especially noted that Count Arundel of Wardour was apprehended and committed to ward in a gentleman's house merely because it was reported that he had made some provision of armour.

Elizabeth's aversion to physic-taking formed one of her peculiar characteristics ; the more remarkable since she was, notwithstanding her pertinacity in concealing her ailments, not un-

frequently indisposed. Her reasons were cogent for her antipathy to medicine, for whilst other sciences progressed rapidly in her century, that of physic remained in a crude and barbarous state. Her courtiers, who loved to see their outward persons bedizened with gold and pearls, thought doses of the same would infinitely comfort and refresh the interior. In a contemporary letter Sir Charles Cavendish regretted he could not send some of his favourite nostrum, salt of *gold*, to old Lady Shrewsbury ; and notices that “the *pearls*, ten grains, are to be taken fourteen days together; as to the *coral*, Sir Walter Raleigh saith he hath little left.”

An ounce of magnesia would have done them more good medicinally than all the pearls and coral in the Red Sea. But such were the prescriptions administered to the great in the sixteenth century, while the poor and the middle classes, who sighed in vain to swallow the pulverised pearls and powdered diamond with which their betters regaled themselves were forced to rely on the traditional merits of native herbs and simples, gathered, with potent charms, in proper planetary hours ; and certainly, notwithstanding the latter-named superfluities, their share of the healing art was the most efficacious. No wonder the queen’s strong judgment and acute perceptiveness made her repudiate the physic judged in accordance with her regal state, and trust to nature ; she thus happily avoided doses of gold, pearls, and coral.

It was a customary device with Essex, when any difference occurred between the queen and him, to feign himself sick, to see how far he could excite the sympathy of his royal mistress, who, to do her justice, generally testified tender compassion for the maladies of her ministers and officers of State, and appears to have been frequently imposed upon in this way. “My Lord of Essex,” observes Rowland Whyte,* “kept his bed the most part of yesterday ; yet did one of his chamber tell me, ‘he could not weep for it, for he knew his lord was not sick.’ There is not a day passes that the queen sends not often to see him, and himself privately goeth every day to see her.”

* Whyte wrote a series of letters to Sir Robert Sidney in which much Court gossip is contained.—Ed.

In another letter Whyte says : "Full fourteen days his lordship kept in ; her majesty, as I heard, meant to break him of his will, and to pull down his great heart, but found it a thing impossible, and says, 'he holds it from the mother's side ;' but all is well again, and no doubt he will grow a mighty man in our State."

Whyte's secret correspondence indicates that Essex was the fountain-head from which all favour and preferment then flowed, and that it was necessary for those in command abroad to use his influence with the queen even to obtain the necessary munitions for her majesty's own service. Essex was evidently jealous of interest being made to the queen through any other quarter, and kept the most vigilant espionage on the correspondence of the ladies of the royal household.

"Yesterday," notes Whyte in his letter to Sidney, "a principal follower of my Lord of Essex told me 'that he saw two letters of yours sealed with gold and the broad arrow head directed to two of the maids (of honour), and that a knight, who was too open, had charge to deliver them.' I think this was told me on purpose that I should notice it."

Elizabeth appears at all times to have considered herself morally responsible, in the expenditure of her subsidies, to those from whose purses the supplies had been drawn. Hence her oftentimes annoying interference in matters of which a lady could scarcely be a competent judge, and her anxiety to use all possible economy ; and though she occasionally found that small savings are the cause of loss and inconvenience in more important matters, she was right in the aggregate, since the underlings of office felt a restraining check from the Crown itself if they attempted any of the lavish and wasteful expenditure which in latter times has been too little regarded by the higher powers. The personal control which Elizabeth exercised in these matters, affords now and then an amusing feature in the personal history of this extraordinary woman, and a curious variety in the characteristics of female royalty.

"Here hath been," says Rowland Whyte, "much ado between the queen and the lords about the preparation for sea, some of

them urging that it was necessary for her safety, but she opposed it. 'No danger appearing,' she said, 'and that she would not make wars, but arm for defence, understanding how much of her treasure was spent already in victuals for ships at sea and soldiers by land.' She was very angry with Lord Burleigh for suffering it, seeing no greater occasion. No reason or persuasion of the lords could prevail; but she ordered all proceedings to be stopped, and sent my Lord Thomas Howard word that he should not go to sea. Monsieur Charron, the ambassador from the States, being sent for, spoke to the queen, but said afterwards 'he had neither time nor recollection to urge the reinforcement of the horse, nor was the time fit for it; her majesty being so unquiet, he could not tell what to do or say.' Charron said, 'the States desired an English regiment in their pay,' but that it was denied. The next day, when Essex was asked if her majesty had read Sir Robert Sidney's statement of the wants of the Governor of Flushing, he said, 'the queen hath read it, and made others that were by acquainted with its purport, after which she put it in her pocket, and said she marvelled why, in such a time, the demand should be made, since Flushing was not besieged, but that her governors were never well but when they could draw her into unnecessary charges.'"

Formidable preparations were making in the Spanish ports at that very time, which it was supposed were designed for another expedition against England. Philip II. had made a solemn vow "to avenge the destruction of the Armada on Elizabeth, if he were reduced to pawn the last candlestick on his domestic altar." If wealth, however, could have effected the conquest of England, Philip had no lack of the glittering mammon. The gold and silver mines of Mexico and Peru were to him like a realisation of the fabled treasures of *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. The wretched natives were employed, like the slaves of the lamp, in working the mines, and the Spanish monarch had dollars of silver and ingots of gold for the bringing home, when his carracks were not intercepted and made prizes by Raleigh, Frobisher, and Drake, and a dozen other bold naval commanders, who somewhat tarnished their laurels by filling up their spare time in piratical

enterprises ; but such was the spirit of the times. The energies and nautical skill of some of these daring adventurers were now required for a more honourable enterprise. The Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham advised the queen to anticipate the designs of the enemy by sending out an expedition to destroy his ships, his arsenals, and his ports. Essex, whose chivalric spirit panted for a better employment than the inglorious post of a Court minion, and was weary of the degrading bondage in which he was held by his royal mistress, eagerly seconded the sage counsel of the lord-admiral, which was as strenuously opposed by Burleigh and his party.

The queen was at last convinced of the expediency of the expedition, and gave the command of the naval department to Lord Howard of Effingham, and that of the military force destined to be employed against Cadiz to Essex, but with strict injunctions that he was not to undertake any enterprise without first holding a council of war. In this, Elizabeth acted in conformity to the opinion she had written to the King of France, when she told him "Essex was not to be trusted with the reins, and that the natural impetuosity of his character required a bridle rather than a spur."

She was, besides, moved with a tender solicitude for his personal safety. She composed a prayer for the success of the expedition, and sent a farewell letter, full of loving and encouraging promises, to Essex. His crafty rival, Sir Robert Cecil, added one from himself, for the sake of subjoining a choice dose of adulation for the queen, in allusion to the prayer she had compounded. "No prayer," observes the profane sycophant, "is so fruitful as that which proceedeth from those who, nearest in nature and power, approach the Almighty. None so near approach his place and essence as a celestial mind in a princely body. Put forth, therefore, my lord, with full confidence, having your sails filled with her heavenly breath for a forewind." If Essex were not nauseated with such a piece of shameless hypocrisy as this, he had no occasion to apprehend any qualms from the effects of a sea voyage.

The details of the expedition will be found in Camden, Birch, Lingard, and the other historians of Elizabeth's reign. It will

be sufficient to notice that Essex distinguished himself most brilliantly both by land and sea, and that, disregarding the private orders of the queen, which were for the first time communicated to him by the lord admiral, that "he should not expose his person to peril by leading the assault," he abandoned the safe post that had been assigned to him, and rushed into the hottest battle. It was his gallantry and promptitude that won Cadiz with all its treasures, his humanity that preserved the lives of the defenders of the town, his chivalry that protected the women and children and religious communities from ill-treatment ; so perfect was his conduct on this occasion that he was spoken of with enthusiasm in the Spanish Court both by the king and the infanta, his daughter. "It is not often," observed Philip of this generous victor, "that such a gentleman is seen among heretics."

The envy of Raleigh was excited, though he had performed his *devoir* gallantly in his ship, the *Warspite* ; but his jealousy led to a contention with Essex as to the manner of attacking the richly laden merchant fleet, and in the meantime the Duke of Medina set fire to it, to prevent it from falling into their hands. The loss of the Spaniards was estimated at 20,000,000 ducats, and the English officers and commanders were greatly enriched. Essex desired to retain Cadiz, and offered to maintain it with only four hundred men for three months, by the end of which time succours might arrive from England, and he calculated on being joined by the enslaved Moors, who, having been rendered desperate by Philip's iron rod of empire, were ripe for a revolt. But the other commanders, being eager to secure their rich booty, overruled all his chivalric projects, and insisted on returning home with what they had got.

Essex expected to be distinguished with especial praise by the queen, and to receive additional honours and preferment ; but the Cecil party had succeeded in prejudicing the royal mind against him. His pride, vain-glory, extravagance, and immorality had all been represented to her with exaggerations. They made light of the capture of Cadiz, and gave Sir Walter Raleigh the chief credit for the success that had been achieved. Then when

her majesty learned that the plunder had been divided among the commanders and their men, she was so greatly exasperated at being defrauded of her share that she expressed herself very intemperately against Essex, and declared "that if she had hitherto done his pleasure, she would now teach him to perform hers." Not contented with venting her anger in empty words, she sent word to him and the lord admiral that, as they had divided the booty, they might take upon themselves the payment of the soldiers and mariners. Essex on this hastened to the Court to offer his explanations to the queen in person ; but as she was bent on mortifying him, she refused to listen to him in private, and compelled him to submit to a long investigation before the privy council day after day, till, his patience being fairly exhausted, he turned upon the Cecils and proved that the commissioners appointed by Burleigh to look to her majesty's interests had neglected to do so, that he had been opposed in every way when he sought the glory and advantage of his country ; and that but for the interference of their creatures he might have intercepted the richest treasure-fleet of the King of Spain for her majesty.

On September 4th intelligence was received that this fleet, with twenty millions of dollars, had safely arrived in the ports of Spain. The queen then manifested so much resentment against those who had been the cause of her losing this mighty prize that Burleigh thought it most prudent to conciliate Essex ; and when the queen claimed the ransom which the inhabitants of Cadiz had paid for their lives, he expressed a decided opinion that the earl, as the victor, was entitled to this money, one hundred and twenty thousand crowns, and not her majesty, although he had been the very person who first suggested to her that it was her right. Elizabeth, infuriated at this double dealing, called Burleigh "a miscreant and a coward ;" told him "he was more afraid of Essex than herself," and rated him so fiercely that the aged minister retired from her presence in great distress, and wrote a pitiful complaint of his hard usage to Essex, detailing her majesty's ireful language, and added "that, having had the misfortune of incurring his lordship's ill will at the same time, he considered himself in worse case than those who, in avoiding

Scylla, fell into Charybdis, for it was his misfortune to fall into both." Essex wrote civilly in reply, but really gave Burleigh little credit for sincerity. His secretary, Anthony Bacon, sarcastically observed "that the merit of Essex having regained the good-will of her majesty, the old fox was reduced to crouch and whine and write in such submissive terms to him, subscribing himself, your lordship's, if you will, at commandment."

In 1596 death was busy among the great placemen of Elizabeth's Cabinet, and no less busy were the courtiers in scheming and soliciting for the reversion of the various offices that were thus vacated.

Essex and the queen came to issue this year on two points : one was her appointing Sir Francis Vere to the office of Governor of Brill, which the earl vehemently opposed, arguing that it ought to be given to a person of higher rank and greater experience, as Sir Francis held only a colonelcy in the service of the States of Holland ; but Elizabeth had marked his talents, and insisted on bestowing the preferment upon him. The other dispute was on the old subject of the place of Secretary of State, which, although it had been held provisionally by Sir Robert Cecil for five years, Essex still urged the queen either to restore to Davison or to bestow it on his learned friend, Sir Thomas Bodley, the celebrated founder of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Perhaps Essex roused the combative spirit of his royal mistress by the energy and pertinacity with which he recommended Sir Thomas Bodley to her favour and insisted on his merits ; or it might be that Elizabeth was convinced that he was a gentleman of too noble a disposition to give up his integrity to the degrading practice of official chicanery ; for she refused even to allow Burleigh, who was willing to make that concession, to associate him in the commission with his son. Certainly Sir Thomas Bodley was not very likely to run smoothly in harness with such a colleague as Sir Robert Cecil.

The presumption of Philip II., which led him, in his old age, to fancy he might make his daughter, Clara Eugenia, Queen of France, *malgré* the Salic Law, having failed to achieve that object, he now once more directed his energies to the equally

absurd chimera of placing her on the throne of England, as the legitimate heir of the House of Lancaster. Intelligence reached Elizabeth that he was fitting out another expedition for the purpose of invading her realm. At first her love of peace induced her to slight the warning, but Essex succeeded in convincing her that the preparations were formidable, and that the Spaniards designed to make a descent on the coast of Ireland, where the greatest disaffection prevailed, and she consented that a fleet should be sent out to attack the shipping in the Spanish ports. A hollow reconciliation was effected between Essex, the Cecils, and Sir Walter Raleigh, and Essex was appointed as commander-in-chief of the forces by sea and land. Lord Thomas Howard and Raleigh were the vice- and rear-admirals, Mountjoye was lieutenant-general, and Sir Francis Vere, marshal.

As usual a great many young noblemen and gentlemen joined the fleet ; they set sail from Plymouth on July 9th, making a gallant show, with waving plumes, glittering arms, and gay accoutrements. They were overtaken by a terrible thunderstorm, which dismantled some of the vessels, drove them back into port, and so disheartened many of the landsmen that they deserted. Essex and Raleigh took horse, and posted together to the queen, to learn her majesty's pleasure. She gave orders that they should destroy the Spanish ships in Ferral harbour, and intercept the West India fleet.

There were some noble points in Essex, though in his general conduct he constantly reminds us of a spoiled and wayward child. When the disobedience of his great enemy, Sir Walter Raleigh, to his orders in attacking the town of Fayal, before his arrival with the rest of the fleet, disarranged his plans and abridged the success of his squadron, one of his followers urged him to bring Sir Walter Raleigh to a court-martial for his offence. "So I should," replied the generous Essex, "if he were my friend." * There were not wanting tempters who represented to the earl "that if he omitted so excellent an opportunity of ridding himself of this formidable adversary by dealing with him according to the stern dictum of martial law, he might

* See Appendix, Note H.

live to repent it himself," alleging, no doubt, the case of Drake's beheading his second in command, Doughty, as a precedent ; but the nature of Essex was too noble to be persuaded to any act allied to baseness. The queen, on his return, commended Raleigh, laid all the blame of the failure of the expedition on Essex, and reproached him for the great outlay it had cost her.

The following details from Rowland Whyte's private letters show the restless fermentation of the Court intrigues at that period, and that there had been a vain attempt to introduce a substitute for Essex as favourite to the queen. "Now that Lord Herbert is gone, he is much blamed for his cold and weak manner of pursuing her majesty's favour, having had so good steps to lead unto it ; there is want of spirit and courage laid to his charge, and that he is a melancholy young man,"—a temperament little likely to recommend any one to the favour of Elizabeth. "Young Carey," continues the Court newsman, "follows it with more care and boldness. My Lady Katerin Howard is come to Court, and this day sworn of the privy chamber, which doth greatly strengthen that party. I am credibly informed, by a very wise and grave man, that at this instant the lord-admiral is able to do with the queen as much as my Lord Leicester was, if he list to use his credit with her."

It was certainly more reasonable that the queen should bestow her favour on her illustrious kinsman, a gentleman who had deserved so well of his country as the hero of the Armada, than on the mere Court satellites who hovered round her for the sake of the things that were in her gift.

Queen Elizabeth was very sparing of her honours, which rendered them more prized by those who were judged by this great sovereign worthy of obtaining such distinctions. She was not lavish in bestowing the accolade of knighthood. As for the dignity of a peer, it was rarely indeed conferred by her, and then always in such a manner as to impress her subjects with the importance of the reward. There was something truly worthy of exciting high and chivalric emprise among the gentlemen of England when a maiden sovereign bestowed the dearly prized dignity of the peerage by personal creation, and under such

circumstances as those which distinguished the hero of the Armada. The details of this interesting ceremonial are thus given by Whyte :

“As the queen came from chapel this day, she created my lord admiral, Lord Thomas Howard, Earl of Nottingham. My Lord Cumberland carried his sword, my Lord of Sussex his cap and coronet. He was brought in by the Earls of Shrewsbury and Worcester. Her majesty made a speech to him in acknowledgment of his services, and Mr. Secretary read his patents in a loud voice, which are very honourable ; all his great services recited in 1588, and lately at Cales. All this was done in one day.”

Essex conceived himself to be deeply aggrieved by the latter clause, which seemed to award to the lord admiral the palm of honour for the taking of Cadiz, only mentioning himself as an adjunct, and no reward had been conferred on him for his services on that occasion. He fretted himself sick at this implied slight, and took to his bed. The queen's heart relented, and, feeling that she had acted harshly towards him, she chid the Cecils as the cause of what had taken place. While she was in this frame of mind she encountered Sir Francis Vere in the gardens of Whitehall Palace ; calling him to her, she questioned him as to the ill success of the expedition, which she entirely charged on Essex, both for not burning and spoiling the fleet at Ferral and for missing the Indian fleet. Sir Francis defended his absent friend with great courage, even to the raising his voice somewhat louder than was consistent with the reverence due to the sovereign, but this, as he explained, was not out of disrespect to her majesty, but that all might hear what he said, charging the blame upon those who deserved it. Some of these, being present, were confronted with him, and compelled to retract their false witness against Essex before the queen. Her majesty, well pleased with the manly and honest conduct of Sir Francis Vere, sat down at the end of the walk, and, calling him to her, fell into more confidential discourse on the subject of Essex's peculiar temper ; and, being willing to listen to all that could be urged in his favour, before Sir Francis left her she spoke graciously in his commendation, and shortly after received him at Court. In

December, 1597, the earl was restored to favour, and created earl marshal by the queen's patents. This was one great cause of the animosity afterwards borne to him by his great enemy, the Earl of Nottingham, who, with justice, considered that he had more right to that office than the earl, since it had been strictly hereditary in his family from the days of their royal ancestor, Thomas of Brotherton, whose daughter, Margaret Plantagenet, as we have seen, claimed it as her right by descent; and, being precluded by her sex from exercising its duties, she invested her grandson, Mowbray, Earl of Norfolk, with it, as her man. Essex offered to decide this quarrel by single combat with either the admiral or his sons, or all of them, but the queen would not permit it, and employed Sir Walter Raleigh to effect a reconciliation. The Earl of Nottingham would not dispute the queen's pleasure, but on December 20th resigned his staff as lord steward of the household, and retired to his house at Chelsea under pretence of sickness.

Essex was now so completely restored to the good graces of the queen that he even ventured on the experiment of attempting to bring his mother, who had been in disgrace with her royal kinswoman ever since her marriage with Leicester, to Court once more. Elizabeth did not refuse to receive her, but tantalised both mother and son by appointing a place and hour convenient for the interview, and then, when the time came, sent an excuse. This she did repeatedly. There were then attempts made by Lady Leicester to meet her majesty at the houses of her friends, but there Elizabeth also made a point of disappointing her little project.

"On Shrove Monday," says Rowland Whyte, "the queen was persuaded to go to Mr. Comptroller's, and there was my Lady Leicester, with a fair jewel of £300. A great dinner was prepared by my Lady Shandos, and the queen's coach ready, when, upon a sudden, she resolved not to go, and so sent word."

Essex, who had taken to his bed on these repeated indications of unabated hostility to his mother, roused himself from his sullen manifestation of unavailing anger, and came to the queen in his night-gown, by the private way, to intercede with her, but

could not carry his point. "It had been better not moved," continues the watchful observer of his proceedings, "for my Lord of Essex, by importuning the queen in these unpleasing matters, loses the opportunity he might take of obliging his ancient friends."

Elizabeth had never forgiven her cousin Lettice her successful rivalry with regard to Leicester, although the grave had now closed over him for nearly nine years, and his place in her capricious favour was supplied by the countess's gallant son. At length, however, the urgency of Essex in behalf of his mother prevailed, and in spite of the cherished anger over which Elizabeth had gloomily brooded for nearly twenty years, the countess was admitted into her presence once more. A tender scene, if not a temporary reconciliation, appears to have taken place on this occasion, for Rowland Whyte says :—

"My Lady Leicester was at Court, kissed the queen's hand and her breast, and did embrace her, and the queen kissed her. My Lord of Essex is in exceeding favour here. Lady Leicester departed from Court exceedingly contented, but being desirous to come again and kiss the queen's hand, it was denied, and some wonted unkind words given out against her."

Francis Bacon took the trouble of composing a long letter of advice to Essex on the manner in which he judged it would be most expedient for him to demean himself to the queen, so as to improve her favourable disposition towards him. The enemies of the envied man whom the queen delighted to honour, of course delighted to carry evil reports of him to the royal ear ; but it frequently happens that injudicious friends are more to be feared than the bitterest of foes. The real cause of his disgrace may doubtless be attributed to the following cause :—His fair, frail sister, Lady Rich, who was one of the ladies of the queen's bed-chamber, and was loved and trusted for his sake, most ungratefully united with her husband—with whom she could not agree in anything but mischief—in a secret correspondence with the King of Scots, under the feigned name of Ricardo and Rialta ; James they called Victor. Their letters were written in cipher, and they had nicknames for all the Court. Thomas Fowler, Burleigh's spy in Scotland, gave information

of this correspondence to his employer, with these particulars, "that Queen Elizabeth herself was called Venus, and the Earl of Essex the Weary Knight, because he was exceeding weary of his office, and accounted his attendance a thrall that he lived in, and hoped for a change, which was that the queen would die in a year or two." King James commended much the fineness of Rialta's wit. After Burleigh was armed with such intelligence, no wonder Essex's favour with Elizabeth began to decline.

Essex, unconscious of the broken ground on which his sister's folly had placed him, carried himself more loftily every day in the council room, and in the privy chamber assumed the airs of a spoiled child, who was secure of getting its own way by petulance. Elizabeth was in a great state of irritability on account of the King of France consulting his own interest rather than the political line of conduct she had prescribed as the conditions of her friendship. Henry was bent on concluding an amicable treaty with Spain, and she sent word to him "that the true sin against the Holy Ghost was ingratitude, and upbraided him with the breach of his engagements to her." Henry offered to mediate a general peace, in which England should be included, and to this measure Burleigh was disposed. Essex argued vehemently in favour of war. The aged minister, now tottering on the brink of the grave, viewed the dazzling visions of military glory in a truer point of light than that in which they appeared to the young, fiery earl marshal, and after a warm debate on the subject, he drew out a prayer-book, and, putting it into his combative opponent's hand, pointed in silence to the text—"Men of blood shall not live out half their days." The warning made no impression on Essex at the time, but it was afterwards regarded as prophetic of his fate. The veteran statesman, who had trimmed his sails to weather out the changeful storms that had sent queens, princes, and nobles to the block during the reigns of four Tudor sovereigns, required not the gift of second sight to perceive the dark destiny that impended over the rash knight-errant who filled the perilous office of favourite to the last and haughtiest of that despotic race. To him who knew the temper of the queen and the character of

Essex, well might the "coming event cast its shadow before." Rapidly as the waning sands of life now ebbed with Burleigh, he lived to triumph in that fierce collision of uncontrollable temper between Essex and the queen which was the sure prelude of the fall of the imprudent favourite.

Ireland was in a state of revolt, and the appointment of a suitable person to fill the difficult and responsible office of lord deputy of that distracted country became a matter of important consideration to the queen and her Cabinet. The subject was warmly debated one day in the royal closet, when no one was present but the queen, the lord admiral, Sir Robert Cecil, Windebank, Clerk of the Seal, and Essex. Her majesty named Sir William Knollys, her near relative, as the person best fitted for the post. Although Knollys was his own uncle, Essex, being aware that the suggestion emanated from the Cecils, opposed it with more vehemence than prudence, and insisted that the appointment ought to be given to Sir George Carew. The queen, offended at the positive tone in which Essex had presumed to overbear her opinion and advance his own, made a sarcastic rejoinder, on which he so far forgot himself as to turn his back on her with a contemptuous expression. Her majesty, exasperated beyond the bounds of self-control by this insolence, gave him a sound box on the ear, and bade him "go and be hanged!"

Essex behaved like a petulant school-boy on this occasion, for instead of receiving the chastisement which his own ill-manners had provoked as a sort of angry love-token, and kissing the royal hand in return for the buffet, he grasped his sword-hilt with a menacing gesture. The lord admiral hastily threw himself between the infuriated earl and the person of the queen, and fortunately prevented him from disgracing himself by the un-knightly deed of drawing his weapon upon a lady and his sovereign; but he swore with a deep oath, "that he would not have taken that blow from King Henry, her father, and that it was an indignity that he neither could nor would endure from any one!" To these rash words he added some impertinence about "a king in petticoats," rushed with marked disrespect from the royal presence, and instantly withdrew from Court.

This stormy scene in the royal drama of Elizabeth's life and reign occurred June, 1598. The Lord Chancellor Egerton wrote a friendly letter of advice to Essex, entreating him to make proper submission to his offended sovereign, to whom he owed so many obligations, and to sue for pardon. It is more than probable that Egerton's letter was written by the desire of the queen, and dictated by her, or surely two very powerful arguments for the performance of the course suggested by him would have been used—namely, the reverence due from a young man to a princess of the advanced age to which her majesty had now attained, and also his near relationship to her, as the great-grandson of her aunt, Mary Boleyn.

In reply to the lord keeper's sage advice, Essex wrote a passionate letter complaining of the hardness of the queen's heart and of the indignity he had received. The blow had entered into his soul, and he says, "Let Solomon's fool laugh when he is stricken; let those that mean to make their profit of princes show no sense of princes' injuries; let them acknowledge an infinite absoluteness on earth who do not believe in an absolute infinitiveness in heaven. As for me, I have received wrong, and I feel it." It was in vain that the mother and sisters of Essex, and all who wished him well, endeavoured to mollify his haughty spirit: he maintained a sullen resentment for several months, in the expectation that the queen would, in the end, become a suppliant to him for a reconciliation.

Meantime Elizabeth was taken up with watching over the last days of her old servant, Burleigh. He expired on August 4th, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. How deeply he was regretted by his royal mistress may be seen by the affecting witness borne by Harrington of her sorrowful remembrance of her old friend. "The queen's highness doth often speak of him in tears, and turn aside when he is discoursed of, nay, even forbiddeth his name to be mentioned in the council. This I have by some friends who are in good liking with Lord Buckhurst, the new Lord Treasurer."

On September 13th died Philip II. of Spain, having survived Burleigh about six weeks.

CHAPTER XII.

Return of Essex to Court—Hollow reconciliation of the queen—She appoints him Lord Deputy of Ireland—His despairing letter to the queen—He goes to Ireland—False reports of Elizabeth's death—Her soliloquy—Continued displeasure with Essex—His unauthorised return—Surprises Elizabeth in her bedchamber—Apparent reconciliation of the queen with Essex—She alters her manner, and constitutes him a prisoner—Her increasing anger—Proceedings against Essex—Intercession of the French Court—Essex's dangerous illness—Temporary relentings of the queen—She sends her physician to visit him—Renewal of her anger—Essex's penitential letters—Sends a new year's gift to Elizabeth—His mother tries to see the queen—Conversations between her majesty and Bacon—Essex brought before the council—Elizabeth's assumed gaiety—Her inward trouble—Her visit to Sir Robert Sidney—Essex's injurious speeches of the queen—His rash conduct—Endeavours to excite a tumult—Fails—Surrenders himself prisoner—His trial and execution—Elizabeth's manner of receiving the news—She goes to Dover—Letters and messages between her and Henry IV.—She tries to induce him to visit her—Biron's embassy—Queen receives him at Basing—returns to London—Shows Biron the heads on the Tower—They discuss Essex—Elizabeth opens her last Parliament—Her popular declaration to the Commons—Declares herself weary of life—Her regrets for the death of Essex—Melancholy state of her mind—Declining health—Cecil's secret correspondence with the King of Scots—Removes to Richmond Palace—Death-bed confession of Lady Nottingham—Elizabeth's anger—Last scenes of her life—Report of her apparition before death—Last offices of devotion—Her death—Funeral.

THE courtiers had predicted that the proud spirit of Essex would never bow to the humiliation of suing to the queen for pardon. He had taken up the high tone of an injured person, and he intimated that he expected satisfaction for the blow he had received, regardless of the gallant Spanish proverb, "*Blancos manos no offendite*"—"White hands never offend." The queen demanded an apology for his insolent demeanour, as well she might. He whose duty it was, as earl marshal, to defend her from all personal

injury, and to commit to the prison over which his office gave him jurisdiction any one who raised brawls in the Court or violated in any manner the solemn etiquettes which guard the approaches to the royal person—he had conducted himself in a manner which would have ensured any one else a lodging in the Marshalsea, if not in the Tower, with a heavy Star Chamber fine ; and yet the queen had only punished him with a box on the ear, to which he had responded in a manner that might have brought another man to the block. At length, however, some compromise was effected, and in November he was again received at Court, and as if nothing had happened to occasion a five months' absence.

The affairs of Ireland had, meantime, assumed a more gloomy aspect than they had yet done ; the whole country was in a state of that disaffection which is the offspring of misrule and misery, and the province of Ulster was in open rebellion under the Earl of Tyrone. The choice of a new lord deputy was still a matter of debate ; the queen considered Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoye, was a suitable person to undertake that difficult office. Essex again ventured to dissent from the royal opinion, and raised objections not only to that young nobleman, but to every one else who was proposed, till at last the queen, finding no one would satisfy him, insisted on his taking the appointment himself. This post was bestowed in anger rather than love ; his rivals and foes rejoiced in the prospect of being rid of his presence in the Court ; and that there was a combination among them to render it a snare to accomplish his ruin, no one who reads the hints given by Markham to his friend Harrington, who was sent out by the queen as a spy on Essex, can for a moment doubt.

“If,” says he, “the Lord Deputy Essex perform in the field what he hath promised in the council, all will be well ; but though the queen hath granted forgiveness for his late demeanour in her presence, we know not what to think thereof. She hath, in all outward semblance, placed confidence in the man who so lately sought other treatment at her hands ; we do sometime think one way and sometime another. What betideth the lord deputy is known to Him only who knoweth all ; but when a man hath so

many showing friends and so many *unshowing* enemies, who learneth his end here below ? I say, do you not meddle in any sort, nor give your jesting too freely among those you know not." The solemn warnings which Markham addresses to Harrington are sufficiently portentous of the approaching fall of Essex, which is as shrewdly predicted in this remarkable letter as if it had been settled and foreknown. "Two or three of Essex's sworn foes and political rivals, Mountjoye's kinsmen," he says, "are sent out in your army. They are to report all your conduct to us at home. As you love yourself, the queen, and me, discover not these matters ; if I had not loved you they had never been told. High concerns deserve high attention ; you are to take account of all that passes in this expedition, and keep journal thereof unknown to any in the company—this will be expected of you."

Essex appears to have received some hint that his appointment was the work of his enemies, and he endeavoured to back out of the snare, but in vain, and in the bitterness of his heart he addressed the following sad and passionate letter to Elizabeth :—

THE EARL OF ESSEX TO THE QUEEN.

"From a mind delighting in sorrow ; from spirits wasted with passion ; from a heart torn in pieces with care, grief, and travail ; from a man that hateth himself and all things else that keep him alive ; what service can your majesty expect, since any service past deserves no more than banishment and proscription to the cursedest of all islands ? It is your rebel's pride and succession that must give me leave to ransom myself out of this hateful prison, out of my loathed body, which, if it happened so, your majesty shall have no cause to mistake the fashion of my death, since the course of my life could never please you.

"Your Majesty's exiled servant.

"ROBERT ESSEX."

The queen was, perhaps, touched with the profound melancholy of this letter, for she betrayed some emotion when he kissed her hand at parting, and she bade him a tender farewell. The people crowded to witness his departure, and followed him for more than four miles out of London with blessings and acclamations. It was on March 29th, 1599, that he set forth on this ill-omened expedition. When he left London the day was

calm and fair ; but scarcely had he reached Iselden, when a black cloud from the north-east overshadowed the horizon, and a great storm of thunder and lightning, with hail and rain, was regarded by the superstition of the times as a portent of impending woe.

The policy pursued by Essex was of a pacific character. He loved the excitement of battle when in the cause of freedom or when the proud Spaniard threatened England with invasion ; but as the Governor of Ireland his noble nature inclined him to the blessed work of mercy and conciliation. He ventured to disobey the bloody orders he had received from the short-sighted politicians who were for enforcing the same measures which had converted that fair isle into a howling wilderness and goaded her despairing people into becoming brigands and rabid wolves. If the generous and chivalric Essex had been allowed to work out his own plans, he would probably have healed all wounds, and proved the regenerator of Ireland ; but surrounded as he was by spies, and thwarted by his deadly and jealous foes in the Cabinet, and, finally, rendered an object of suspicion to the most jealous of sovereigns, he only accelerated his own doom, without ameliorating the evils he would fain have cured.

The events of the Irish campaign belong to general history ; suffice it to say that Elizabeth was greatly offended with Essex for three things. He had appointed his friend Southampton general of the horse against her majesty's express orders, who had not yet forgiven that nobleman for his marriage ; he had treated with Tyrone when she had ordered him to fight ; and he had exercised a privilege of making knights which, though in strict accordance with the laws of chivalry, she wished to be confined exclusively to the sword of the sovereign. She wrote stern and reproachful letters to him. He presumed to justify himself for all he had done and all he had left undone, and demanded reinforcements of men and munitions of war, for his forces were reduced by desertion, sickness, and the contingencies of war. The queen was infuriated, and was, of course, encouraged by her ministers to refuse everything. Unable to cope with Tyrone, from the inefficiency of his forces, he was glad to meet

on amicable grounds in a private interview, where many civilities were exchanged, and he promised to convey the conditions required by the chief to the queen. Though those conditions were no more than justice and sound policy ought to have induced the sovereign to grant, Elizabeth regarded it as treason on the part of Essex even to listen to them, and she expressed herself in that spirit to her unfortunate viceroy. The fiery and impetuous earl was infuriated, in his turn, at the reports that were conveyed to him of the practices against him in the English Cabinet. He was accused of aiming at making himself King of Ireland, with the assistance of Tyrone; nay, even of aspiring to the crown of England, and that he was plotting to bring over a wild Irish army to dethrone the queen. Elizabeth's health suffered in consequence of the ferment in which her spirits were kept and the agonising conflict of her mind between love and hatred. She removed to her fairy palace of Nonsuch for a change of air; and hearing soon after that a rumour of her death had got into circulation, she was somewhat troubled, and would often murmur to herself, "*Mortua sed non sepulta*"—"Dead, but not buried."

Elizabeth suffered from needless anxiety at this period: the new King of Spain, Philip III., had indeed sent a formidable expedition to sea, with the declared purpose of attempting a descent on some part of her dominions. Ireland was the weak point, which the disaffection produced by misgovernment rendered vulnerable, and it was artfully insinuated to her majesty that Essex was a traitor at heart; but with such an admiral as the Earl of Nottingham, she had no cause to fear the Spanish fleet; and the treasons of Essex existed only in the malignant representations of Sir Robert Cecil, Raleigh, and Cobham. She wrote, however, in so bitter a style to Essex that he fancied her letters were composed by Raleigh. He perceived that his ruin was determined by the powerful junta of foes who guided the council and had poisoned the royal ear against him.

In an evil hour he determined to return and plead his own cause to his royal mistress, in the fond idea that her own tenderness would second his personal eloquence. At first he is

said to have resolved to bring a body of troops with him for the security of his own person ; but from this unlawful purpose he was dissuaded by Sir Christopher Blount, his mother's husband, and his more prudent advisers. On September 28th he arrived in London, and, learning that the queen was at Nonsuch, he hastily crossed the ferry at Lambeth, attended by only six persons, and seized for his own use the horses of some gentlemen which were waiting there for their masters. He learned from one of his friends that his great enemy, Lord Grey of Wilton, was on the road before him, and that he was posting to Cecil to announce his arrival. It was this adverse circumstance which precipitated the fate of Essex, who, urged by the natural impetuosity of his character, spurred on through mud and mire at headlong speed, in the vain hope of overtaking his foe, that he might be the first to bring the news of his return to Court. Grey had the start of him, and, being probably better mounted, won the fierce race, and had already been closeted a full quarter of an hour with Cecil when Essex arrived at the palace.

It was then about ten o'clock in the morning, and the rash Essex, without pausing for a moment's consideration, rushed into the privy chamber to seek the queen ; not finding her there, he determined at all hazards to obtain an interview before his enemies should have barred his access to her presence, and all breathless, disordered, and travel-stained as he was, his very face being covered with spots of mud, he burst unannounced into her bedchamber, flung himself on his knees before her, and covered her hands with kisses. The queen, who was newly risen, and in the hands of her tire-women, with her hair about her face, and least of all dreaming of seeing him, was taken by surprise, and, moved by his passionate deportment and his caresses, gave him a kinder reception than he had anticipated ; for when he retired from the royal *penetrulia* to make his toilet, he was very cheerful, and "thanked God that after so many troublous storms abroad, he had found a sweet calm at home."

The wonder of the Court gossips was less excited at the unauthorised return of the Lord Deputy of Ireland than that he should have ventured to present himself before the fastidious

queen in such a state of disarray. All were watching the progress of this acted romance in breathless excitement, and when the queen granted a second interview within the hour to the adventurous earl, after he had changed his dress, the general opinion was that love would prevail over every other feeling in the bosom of their royal mistress. The time-serving worldlings then ventured to pay their court to him, and he discoursed pleasantly to all but the Cecil party.

In the evening, when he sought the queen's presence again, he found her countenance changed ; she spoke to him sternly, and ordered him to answer to her council, who were prepared to investigate his conduct, and in the meantime bade him confine himself to his apartment. The following day, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the earl was summoned to go through his first ordeal. When he entered, the lords of the council rose, and saluted him, but resented themselves, while he remained standing, bare-headed, at the end of the board, to answer to the charges that were exhibited against him by Mr. Secretary Cecil, who was seated at the other end,—to wit “his disobedience to her majesty's instructions in regard to Ireland—his presumptuous letters, written to her while there—his making so many idle knights—his contemptuous disregard of his duty in returning without leave—and last (not least), his over-bold going to her majesty's presence in her bedchamber.” This was, indeed, an offence not likely to be forgiven by a royal coquette of sixty-eight, who, though painfully conscious of the ravages of time, was ambitious of maintaining the reputation for perennial beauty, and had been surprised by him whom, in spite of all his offences, she still regarded with fond but resentful passion, at her private morning toilet, undighted and uncoifed, in the most mortifying state of disarray, with her thin grey locks dishevelled and hanging about her haggard countenance, ere she had time to deliberate in which of her eighty wigs, of various hues, it would please her to receive the homage of her deceitful courtiers that day.

That incident certainly sealed the fate of the luckless Essex, though the intrigues of his enemies and his own defective temper combined with many other circumstances to prepare the way

for his fall. After the lords of the council had communicated their report to the queen, she sent word "that she would pause and consider his answers," and he continued under confinement while his enemies dined merrily together. On the following Monday he was committed to the lord keeper's charge at York House, and the queen removed to Richmond. She openly manifested great displeasure against Essex, and when the old Lady Walsingham made humble suit to her that she would please to give him leave to write to his lady, who had just given birth to an infant in this season of fear and trembling, and was much troubled that she neither saw nor heard from him, her majesty would not grant this request, so much was her heart hardened against him.

Elizabeth did not confine her anger to Essex ; her godson, Harrington, whom she had sent out to be a spy on him, instead of fulfilling her wishes in that respect, had lived on terms of the most affectionate confidence with the luckless lord deputy ; had gone with him to confer with Tyrone ; had presented a copy of his translation of Ariosto to the youthful heir of that valiant rebel chief ; had received knighthood from the sword of the lord deputy, and finally attended him on his unauthorised return to England. The first time Harrington entered her majesty's presence, after his return, she frowned, and said, "What ! did the fool bring you, too ? Go back to your business." His description of her demeanour, in a letter to another friend, reminds one of that of an angry lioness, "such, indeed, as left no doubt," he slyly observes, "whose daughter she was. She chafed much," says he, "walked fastly to and fro, looked, with discomposure in her visage, and, I remember, she caught my girdle, when I kneeled to her, and swore, 'By God's Son, I am no queen !—that man is above me ! Who gave him command to come here so soon ? I did send him on other business.' It was long before more gracious discourse did fall to my hearing, but I was then put out of my trouble, and bid 'go home.' I did not stay to be bidden twice. If all the Irish rebels had been at my heels, I should not have made better speed, for I did now flee from one whom I both loved and feared."

Essex, as usual, fell sick on these displeasures ; and his doctors wished that Dr. Bruen, his own private physician, might be summoned to his assistance, but the queen would not permit him to have personal access to the earl, though she licensed a consultation between him and the other doctors. He had so frequently excited the queen's sympathy on former occasions by feigning sickness, when only troubled with ill-humour, that now she would not believe in the reality of his indisposition.

He refused food, but drank to excess, which increased his fever of mind and body, and as if that had not been enough, he sent for eight physicians, and talked of making his will. The queen then gave him leave to take the air in the garden. It was even thought he would be removed to his own house or that of the Lord Treasurer Buckhurst, for the lord keeper and his wife were both indisposed, and heartily sick of their charge. His sisters, the Ladies Northumberland and Rich, came to Court, all in black, to make humble supplication to the queen, that he might be removed to a better air as soon as he was capable of being moved, for now indeed his sickness was no pretence.

"My Lady Essex," says Whyte, "rises almost every day as soon as light to go to my Lord Treasurer's and Sir John Fortescue (on behalf of her lord), for to this Court she may not come." On the second Sunday in December the earl received the Communion, and his lady obtained leave to see him, but found him so reduced by grief of mind and body that when he was removed out of bed, it could only be done by lifting him in the sheets. Little hope was entertained of his recovery. After he had received the Sacrament, Essex sent back to her majesty his two patents of the horse and the ordnance, which she returned to him again. His commission of earl marshal it was understood he should retain for life.

On December 13th the French ambassador, Boissise, wrote to his sovereign "that there were divisions in the council touching Essex, some urging the queen to forgive him, and others to take his life ; that a warrant had been made out for his removal to the Tower, and twice brought to the queen, and twice she had refused to sign it. It appeared to me," continues his excellency,

who certainly took a very friendly part towards the unfortunate earl, "that the time was come when I could make use of the influence of your majesty's name, which I made known to Essex. He sent to me, two days afterwards, to say 'that if by my mediation he was not released, he knew no other means which could be of service, requesting me to speak to the queen as soon as possible.' I sent the next day to ask for an audience, which was granted ; but the Earl of Essex informed me that a change had taken place in his affairs, and desired that I would not mention his name. He had been told that the queen was inclined to grant him his liberty. At all events I was glad to be excused from speaking to her about him, not doubting but that he will hereafter have sufficient occasion for my interference ; and, in fact, the day following he sent to inform me that he expected to be sent to the Tower, and entreated me to do everything in my power to avert this stroke. I therefore went yesterday to see the queen, and, after having conversed with her on various subjects, I said, 'that your majesty, as the most affectionate of her friends, partook in all her sorrows, and felt much regret at the dissatisfaction which she had conceived towards the Earl of Essex, both for the injury which that circumstance might produce in her health and in her affairs, your majesty not wishing to interfere further than you would desire she would do on a like occasion.' I entreated her to consider duly which would be the most expedient : to persist in the punishment of the Earl of Essex, and lose by so doing one of her best servants and ministers, and prolong a dangerous and hazardous war in Ireland ; or, being satisfied with a moderate punishment, make the earl more careful and more capable hereafter of doing her services, and by this means put an end to the war and save her country. I touched on the graces and favours which she had received from Heaven, and how much prudence was the shield of princes, and which she had so frequently employed towards her greatest enemies. I also spoke to her of the services of the earl, which did not permit the suspicion that the fault which he had committed could proceed from any evil design ; and at length I told her 'that your majesty advised her to do as you had done—that is to say, to forgive freely, and

to assure by this means the goodwill and fidelity of her subjects ; and if, besides these considerations, she would have any regard to the recommendations which your majesty offered in favour of the earl, you would consider it as a signal favour, and that you would acknowledge it by any other pleasure or office which she would desire.' She heard me patiently, and then said, but not without emotion, 'that she entreated your majesty not to judge of the fact without being well informed that the earl had so ill-conducted himself in his charge, despising the orders and regulations which he had received from her, that Ireland was in great danger ; that he had conferred with the chief of the rebels without preserving the honour or the dignity of the Crown ; and that he had at last returned to England against her express commands, and had abandoned the army and the country to the mercy of her enemies, which were acts that deserved punishment which she had not yet inflicted, for the earl was well lodged in the house of one of his friends, where he had a good chamber and a gallery to walk in.' She said 'she would consider hereafter what she ought to do, but she begged your majesty to retain your good opinion of her.' "

The narrative of this remarkable conference between Queen Elizabeth and Boissise, while it proves that Henry IV. felt a personal friendship for the unfortunate earl, and was desirous of saving him, shows also that Elizabeth had greatly softened in her resentment against Essex, and that she only intended to humble him. She desired that his eight doctors might hold a consultation on the state of his health, and send her their opinion. Their statement of his maladies was so serious that her majesty became very pensive, and sent Dr. James, her own physician, to him with some broth and a message bidding him "comfort himself, and that, if it were not inconsistent with her honour, she would have come to visit him herself." It was noted that her eyes were full of tears when she uttered these gracious words. The earl appeared to take comfort from the message, but it was feared it came too late, as he appeared almost past hope.

The queen commanded that he should be removed from the room in which he then lay to the lord keeper's own chamber,

and she permitted his sorrowful lady to come to him every morning and remain till night. On December 19th, there was so general a report of his death that the bells were tolled for him. On the Sunday following he was prayed for in all the churches in London. Very severe things were written upon the white walls at Court against Sir Robert Cecil's conduct on this occasion. Another change in the queen's mind appeared at this time, and she discontinued her inquiries after the health of the unfortunate earl. Having been oft deceived by him before as to pretences of sickness, she was now persuaded this was a feint. The ministers were commanded to discontinue their public prayers on his behalf. Too much of politics had, indeed, been mixed up in these supplications, according to the custom of those times, when the pulpit was made the ready vehicle of party agitation.

A determination being formed some weeks later to bring Essex before the Star Chamber, his wife was forbidden to come to him any more till the queen's further pleasure were known, on which she wept piteously. The earl had then recovered his health, and was able to take daily air and exercise in the garden. He wrote a very submissive letter to the queen, entreating that he might not be dealt with by the Star Chamber, and for a while his prayer was granted. A few days after, some offence was taken by the queen because his lady, his mother, the Earl of Southampton, and some others of his devoted friends went to a house that commanded a view into York Gardens, where he was accustomed to walk, and saluted him from a window, so that he perceived and returned their greeting.

Towards the end of February, Lady Rich, unconscious that her secret correspondence defaming her royal mistress to the King of Scots and exposing all her traits of vanity was in Cecil's possession, wrote a letter to the queen in behalf of her brother, so grossly adulatory that her majesty could not but regard it in the light of an insult. There was, withal, a passage in allusion to the earl's personal attendance on her majesty which appeared to contain a very questionable insinuation. Not contented with writing this dangerous letter, she was guilty of

the folly of making it public by reading it to her friends, on which Elizabeth ordered her to confine herself to her own house, and talked of sending her to the Tower and bringing the affair before the Star Chamber.

The unfortunate Essex, while he laboured to defend himself from his wily foes, had little idea whence the undercurrent flowed that had wrecked his fortunes, and for ever.

Lady Leicester, Lady Essex, Lord and Lady Southampton, Mr. Greville, and Mr. Bacon, were, on March 15th, by her majesty's command, removed from Essex House; and on the 16th, Maunday Thursday, Essex was brought there as a prisoner, under the charge of Sir Richard Berkeley, who took possession of all the keys of the house, and dismissed all the servants but one or two, who were permitted to attend to the diet and apparel of their unfortunate master. Lady Essex was allowed to visit him in the daytime.

The queen having formed an intention of bringing Essex before the Star Chamber, opened her design to Mr. Francis Bacon, and said, "whatever she did should be for his chastisement, not for his destruction." Bacon, who was greatly averse to this method of proceeding, remonstrated playfully but strongly against it in these words:—"Madam, if you will have me to speak to you in this argument, I must speak as Friar Bacon's head spake that said, 'time is,' and then 'time was,' and 'time would never be again;' for certainly it is now far too late—the matter is old, and hath taken too much wind." Her majesty seemed offended at this, and rose up with the intention of pursuing her own plan.

In the beginning of midsummer term, Bacon, finding her in the same mind, said to her, "Why, madam, if you needs must have a proceeding, it were best to have it in some such sort as Ovid spake of his mistress, *est aliquid luce patente minus*—to make a council table matter of it, and end." The queen, however, determined to proceed; and Bacon, notwithstanding all his obligations to Essex, consented to lend the aid of his powerful pen in drawing up the declaration against him. His proper office would have been to defend his unfortunate friend, but he

could not resist the temptations offered by the queen, who was determined to enlist his talents on her side. She directed every clause with vindictive care, and made several alterations with her own hand ; and even after the paper was printed, "her majesty, who," as Bacon observes, "if she was excellent in great things, was exquisite in small," noted that he had styled the unfortunate nobleman "My Lord of Essex," objected to this courtesy, and would have him only called "Essex, or the late Earl of Essex."

On May 12th Elizabeth recreated herself with seeing a Frenchman perform feats upon a rope ; and on the following day she commanded the bears, the bull, and an ape to be baited in the tilt-yard ; the day after, solemn dancing was appointed. Meantime, the unfortunate Essex wrote to her this touching letter :—

"Vouchsafe, most dear and most admired Sovereign, to receive this humblest acknowledgment of your majesty's most faithful vassal. Your majesty's gracious message staid me from death, when I gasped for life. Your princely and compassionate increasing of my liberty hath enabled me to wrestle with my many infirmities, which else long ere this had made an end of me. And now this farther degree of goodness, in favourably removing me to mine own house, doth sound in mine ears, as if your majesty spake these words, '*Die not, Essex, for though I punish thine offence, and humble thee for thy good, yet I will one day be served again by thee.*' And my prostrate soul makes this answer, '*I hope for that blessed day.*' All my afflictions of body or mind are humbly, patiently, and cheerfully borne by

"Your majesty's humblest vassal,

"Essex."

The queen then said "that her purpose was to make him know himself and his duty to her, and that she would again use his service."

On June 5th Essex was examined before the commissioners appointed to try his cause. The earl kneeled at the end of the council board, and had a bundle of papers in his hand, which sometimes he put in his hat, which was on the ground by him. He defended himself very mildly and discreetly ; but many who were present wept to see him in such misery. When he was accused of treason, he said "he had been willing to admit all the errors of judgment and conduct into which he had fallen ; but now his honour and conscience were called in question," he added, "I should do God and mine own conscience wrong if I

do not justify myself as an honest man ;” then, taking his George in his hand, and pressing it to his heart, he said, “This hand shall pull out this heart when any disloyal thought shall enter it.” The examination lasted from nine in the morning till eight at night ; he sometimes kneeling, sometimes standing, and occasionally leaning against a cupboard, till at last he had a stool given him, by desire of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

After Essex had gone through the mortifying scene before the council, he implored the lords to intercede with the queen, that she would be pleased to extend her grace to him. The next day Francis Bacon, though employed to plead against him, attended her majesty with the earnest intention of moving her to forgiveness. “You have now, madam,” said he, “obtained the victory over two things, which the greatest princes cannot at their wills subdue ; the one is over fame—the other is over a great mind. For surely the world is now, I hope, reasonably satisfied ; and for my lord, he did show that humiliation towards your majesty as I am persuaded he was never in his lifetime more fit for your majesty’s favour than he is now.” He then urged her majesty to forgive and receive him. She took Bacon’s special pleading in good part, and ordered him to set down all the proceedings at York House in writing, which were afterwards read to her by him ; and when he came to set forth Essex’s answer, she was greatly touched with kindness and relenting towards him, and observed to Bacon “how well he had expressed that part,” adding that “she perceived old love would not easily be forgotten.” Bacon said “he hoped by that she meant her own,” and strenuously advised her to let the matter go no further. “Why,” concluded he, “should you now do that popularly which you would not admit to be done judicially ?”

In July Essex was delivered from the restraint of a keeper. He lived in great privacy, being sick of the ague. He petitioned for leave to retire into the country, only requested permission to kiss her majesty’s hands once more ere he retired from the Court for ever. His sister, Lady Rich, was still under restraint ; and the queen cherished the vengeful intention of bringing her before the council, but continued to treat the Countess of

Northumberland graciously. Essex wrote from time to time letters of the most submissive nature to the queen.

On August 26th he was sent for to York House, where the lord keeper, lord treasurer, and Mr. Secretary signified to him that it was her majesty's pleasure to restore him to liberty, save of access to Court. His humble supplication to be permitted to kiss her hands, in order that he might with the more contentment betake himself to the retirement of the country, was met with a message "that though her majesty was content that he should remain under no guard, save that of duty and discretion, yet he must in no sort suppose himself to be freed from her indignation ; neither must he presume to approach her Court or person." Essex might now be regarded as a prisoner on his parole of honour.

That summer (1600) the queen spent chiefly at Nonsuch and Oatlands. She appointed Lord Mountjoye, the former rival, but now the generous and devoted friend of Essex, to the office of Lord Deputy of Ireland. He endeavoured to excuse himself, from motives of delicacy towards the unfortunate earl ; but Elizabeth would not permit her will to be trifled with. On her mentioning this appointment to Bacon, who appears at this season to have enjoyed her full confidence, he replied, "Surely, madam, you cannot make a better choice, unless you send over my Lord Essex."

"Essex !" exclaimed she with great vehemence ; "when I send Essex back into Ireland, I will marry you. Claim it of me."

Her majesty and her Court amused themselves with hunting and hawking in September, sometimes at Hanworth and sometimes in the New Forest. Elizabeth assumed an appearance of mirthfulness on these occasions which must certainly have been far enough from her heart. The infirmities of her advanced period of life, *malgré* all her Spartan-like attempts to hide them, made themselves felt and occasionally acknowledged. Sir Robert Sidney, in a confidential letter to Harrington, gives a melancholy account of Elizabeth's dejection in private, and this is followed by a characteristic detail of her struggle to go through a fatiguing State visit with which she honoured him

in her usual popular and gracious manner ; but the old woman conquered the goddess, and she was at last fain to call for a staff to support her enfeebled frame, and we perceive throughout how hard a day's work it must have been for her.

"I do see the queen often," observes he ; "she doth wax weak since the late troubles, and Burleigh's death doth often draw tears down her goodly cheeks. She walketh out but little, meditates much alone, and sometimes writes in private to her best friends."

One day she informed Bacon "that Essex had written to her some dutiful letters, which had moved her ; but after taking them to flow from the abundance of his heart, she found them but a preparative to a suit for renewing his farm of sweet wines," of which she had granted him the monopoly in the sunshine of her former favour.

To this petition she had replied "that she would inquire into its annual value," which is said to have amounted to the enormous sum of £50,000 per annum. She added a taunt which it was scarcely in the nature of a brave man and a gentleman to brook, "that when horses became unmanageable it was necessary to tame them by stinting them in the quantity of their food." But Essex, being deeply involved in debt, renewed his suit, and was denied contemptuously.

Bacon wasted much elegant logic in endeavouring to convince Elizabeth that a prudential care for his maintenance was by no means incompatible with the sincerity of his devotion to his sovereign or his penitence for his past faults ; and at length, observing that the queen began to look coolly on him when he came into her presence, he represented to her "that he had, in the integrity of his heart, incurred great peril for pleading the cause of the earl to her, and that his own fall was decreed ;" upon which the queen, perceiving how deeply he was wounded, used many kind and soothing expressions to comfort him, bidding him rest on this, "*gratia mea sufficit*"—"My grace is sufficient for you"—but she said not a word of Essex. Bacon took the hint, and made no further efforts to avert the fate of his benefactor.

Harrington, who had ventured to present a petition to his royal godmother from the earl, remarks "that he had nearly been wrecked on the Essex coast." In fact, the imprudence of Essex rendered it very dangerous for any one to espouse his cause. He had taken the loss of his monopolies and his exile from Court in such evil part that he now began to testify his resentment in every possible way. "The queen," said he, "has pushed me down into private life. I will not be a vile, obsequious slave. The dagger of my enemies has struck me to the hilt. I will not be bound to their car of triumph." The counsels of his secretary, Cuffe, and other violent or treacherous advisers, induced him to assume the character of a demagogue, that he might be carried into office on the shoulders of the people, in spite of the Court party.

His house became the headquarters of the disaffected and desperate. He courted the Puritans, and encouraged them to hold conventicles and preach seditious sermons to political congregations under the shadow of his roof. He publicly discussed his injuries, and was at last guilty of the folly and ingratitude of speaking of the queen as an "old woman, crooked both in body and mind"—a taunt which it was not in Elizabeth's nature to forgive. The dearer Essex had been to her heart, the more keenly did the shaft pierce. His death was decreed in the selfsame hour when this remark reached her ear. His secret league with the King of Scots, to incite that monarch to insist on being recognised as the successor to the crown—his rash meetings with malcontents and desperadoes at Drury House, plotting the seizure of the palace and the Tower—his final act of reckless rebellion might have been forgiven, but this was the spark which kindled a flame of vindictive anger in the heart of the queen which nothing but his blood could quench.

The daughter of Henry VIII. was not likely to endure such treatment from the ungrateful object of her fierce and jealous fondness. She delayed her vengeance, but it was with the feline malice of tantalising her victim with visions of life and liberty. She knew that the mouse was within the reach of her

talons, and that with one blow it was in her power to crush him.

His absurd plan was for his step-father, Sir Christopher Blount, with a chosen party, to seize the palace gate, Davis the hall, and Danvers the guard-chamber, and then himself to rush in from the mews with a further detachment of his desperate followers, and to enter the queen's presence, wherever she might be, and on his knees to beg her to remove his adversaries from her council. If this were resisted, he intended to make a forced reform by calling a Parliament and demanding justice. It had been daringly advanced as a principle by the political agitators who congregated at his house that monarchs themselves were accountable to the superior legislators of the realm, and the queen thought it was time to bring the matter to a crisis. On February 7th Essex received a summons to appear before the privy council, and at the same time a note was put into his hand warning him to take care of himself. He was advised by prudent friends to make his escape, but he vowed that he never would submit to live in exile, and rashly resolved to set everything on one last desperate die—an attempt to raise the citizens of London against the Court. He had an idea that Sir Thomas Smith, the sheriff, would aid him with a thousand of the trained bands, and he summoned all his friends to rally to his assistance at Essex House. How the council allowed him to remain at large is matter of wonder, but such was his popularity that it was doubted whether his arrest would be effected without causing great tumults among the populace.

Harrington draws a vivid picture of the alarm and excitement that pervaded the Court during the fearful pause that intervened before a blow was struck. "The madcaps," says he, "are all in riot, and much evil threatened. In good sooth I fear her majesty more than the rebel Tyrone, and wished I had never received my Lord of Essex's honour of knighthood. She is quite disfavoured and unattired, and these troubles waste her much. She disregardeth every costly cover that cometh to the table, and taketh little but manchet and succory pottage. Every new message from the city disturbs her, and she frowns on all her

ladies. I had a sharp message from her brought by my Lord Buckhurst, namely thus,—‘Go, tell that witty fellow, my godson, to get home; it is no season to fool it here.’ I liked this as little as she doth my knighthood, so took to my boots, and returned to my plough in bad weather. I must not say much, even by this trusty and sure messenger, but the many evil plots and designs have overcome all her highness’s sweet temper.”

On Sunday morning, February 8th, Essex had collected three hundred of his deluded partisans at his house, and had formed the plan of proceeding to Paul’s Cross, in Cheapside, thinking to induce the Lord Mayor, sheriffs, and, in fact, the crowds of citizens and ‘prentices who would attend the preaching there, to join his muster and assist him in forcing his way to the presence of the queen. There was a traitor among his confidants—Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who betrayed all his projects to Cecil. The Lord Mayor and his brethren received orders to keep the people within their own dwellings, and not to attend the preaching. The palace was fortified and doubly guarded, and every prudential measure taken to preserve the peace. About ten in the morning the Lord Chancellor Egerton, the Lord Chief Justice, and some other officers of the Crown applied for admittance at Essex House. After a long parley they were admitted through a wicket. They demanded of Essex, in the name of the queen, the meaning of the tumultuous gathering of persons who were around him in the Court, and commanded his followers to lay down their arms. Essex began to complain of his wrongs; and Southampton said “that his life had been attempted in the Strand by Lord Grey of Wilton, who had cut off his page’s hand.” The lords replied “that Grey had been imprisoned; and if Essex had had wrong, the queen would redress his injuries.” “You lose time,” shouted the mob to Essex. “Away with them! They betray you. Kill them! Keep them in custody. Throw the Great Seal out of the window.” Essex actually impounded the chancellor and his company in his house, while he sallied forth into the streets like a madman, as he was, at the head of his equally frantic party, armed only with rapiers, and some few with pistols, and, dashing down Fleet Street, raised the cry

"England is sold to Spain by Cecil and Raleigh ! They will give the crown to the infanta. Citizens of London, arm for England and the queen !"

All, however, was quiet, the streets were deserted, and he vainly waved his sword and continued to cry, "For the queen ! for the queen !" He endeavoured to obtain arms and ammunition at the shop of an armourer, but was denied. The streets were barricadoed with chains and carts ; but on Ludgate Hill he drew his sword and ordered a charge, which his stepfather Blount executed, and with his own hand slew a man who had been formerly suborned by Leicester to assassinate him. Essex was shot through the hat : his followers began to desert. He had been proclaimed a traitor in one quarter of the city by Garter King at Arms and Thomas Lord Burleigh ; in another, by the Earl of Cumberland. Desperate but unsubdued, he forced his way across St. Paul's to Queenhithe, where he took boat, and, strange to say, succeeded in getting back to Essex House. The queen was at dinner when the noise of the tumult brought the news that Essex was endeavouring to raise the city ; nay, that he had succeeded ; but she was no more disturbed than if she had been told there was a fray in Fleet Street. Her attendants were struck with consternation, not knowing whom to trust ; and Elizabeth alone had the courage to propose going to oppose the insurgents, saying "that not one of them would dare to meet a single glance of her eye. They would flee at the very notice of her approach." This was more consistent with the energy of her temper than the tale that she finished her dinner as calmly as if nothing had happened.

When Essex returned to his house, he found his prisoners, whom he thought at the worst to keep as hostages for his own life, had all been liberated by the perfidious Gorges, who had taken them by water to the palace ; and now all that remained to him was to defend his house, which was invested on every side. But when he beheld the great artillery and the queen's forces round about his house, being sore vexed with the tears and incessant shrieks of the ladies, he after several parleys from the leads of his mansion with the assailing force below, surrendered

his sworn to the lord admiral about ten o'clock at night, on promise of civil treatment for himself and his friends. The other lords and gentlemen who had adhered to his evil fortunes followed his example. That night they were lodged in Lambeth Palace ; for the night was dark, and there was not sufficient water to shoot London Bridge. The next day they were taken by water to the Tower.

Essex and Southampton were arraigned on the 19th before the commissioners appointed for their trial. Even if the majority of the commissioners had not been the sworn foes of Essex, he must have been found guilty by the laws of the land, for he had committed overt acts of treason which nothing but madness could excuse. The Crown lawyers who pleaded against him were Yelverton, who compared him to Catiline and a crocodile, and Coke, who added to the catalogue of his crimes the incompatible charges of atheism and popery, although Essex was a declared Puritan, and told him "that he who aspired to the kingdom of Robert the First should, of his earldom, be Robert the last ;" and when Essex asked him "if he really believed any violence was intended to the queen ?" artfully replied, "You would have treated her as Henry of Lancaster did Richard II.—gone to her as suppliants, and then robbed her of her crown and life." This was a base appeal to an absurd weakness of Elizabeth touching Hayward's history of Henry IV. The worst pang for Essex was to see his former friend, Bacon, rise to refute his defence, and to extol the characters of Cecil, Raleigh, and Cobham. Essex bade him remember "that it was himself who had composed the eloquent letters which he had been advised to write to her majesty exposing their faults." The details of this interesting trial are, however, too diffuse for the limits of this work. Essex was, of course, condemned to death ; and when the sentence was pronounced he said, "I am not a whit dismayed to receive this doom. Death is welcome to me as life. Let my poor quarters, which have done her majesty true service in divers parts of the world, be sacrificed and disposed of at her pleasure."

This arraignment began about nine o'clock in the morning, and continued till six at night. "There was a world of people

waiting to see the event. The news was suddenly divulged in London ; whereat many forsook their suppers, and ran hastily into the street to see the Earl of Essex as he returned to the Tower, with the edge of the axe carried towards him. He went a swift pace, bending his face toward the earth, and would not look upon any of them, though some spake directly to him." His execution was appointed to take place on the 25th, Ash Wednesday. Elizabeth signed the warrant : and it has been said that the tremor of her hand, from agitation, is discernible in that fatal autograph ; but the facsimile of the signature contradicts the fond tradition, for it is firmly written and as elaborately flourished as if she thought more of the beauty of her penmanship than of the awful act of giving effect to the sentence that doomed the mangling axe of the executioner to lay the severed head of her familiar friend and kinsman in the dust.

The romantic story of the ring, which, it is said, the queen had given to Essex in a moment of fondness as a pledge of her affection, with an intimation " that if ever he forfeited her favour, if he sent it back to her, the sight of it would ensure her forgiveness," must not be lightly rejected. It is not only related by Osborne, who is considered a fair authority for other things, and quoted by historians of all parties, but it is a family tradition of the Careys, who were the persons most likely to be in the secret, as they were the relations and friends of all the parties concerned, and enjoyed the confidence of Queen Elizabeth. The following is the version given by Lady Elizabeth Spelman, a descendant of that House, to the editor of her great-uncle Robert Carey's memoirs :—

When Essex lay under sentence of death, he determined to try the virtue of the ring by sending it to the queen and claiming the benefit of her promise ; but knowing he was surrounded by the creatures of those who were bent on taking his life, he was fearful of trusting it to any of his attendants. At length, looking out of his window, he saw early one morning a boy whose countenance pleased him, and him he induced by a bribe to carry the ring, which he threw down to him from above, to the Lady Scrope, his cousin, who had taken so friendly interest in his fate. The boy by mistake carried it to the Countess of

Nottingham, the cruel sister of the fair and gentle Scrope, and as both these ladies were of the royal bedchamber, the mistake might easily occur. The countess carried the ring to her husband, the lord admiral, who was the deadly foe of Essex, and told him the message, but he bade her suppress both. The queen, unconscious of the accident, waited in the painful suspense of an angry lover for the expected token to arrive; but not receiving it, she concluded that he was too proud to make this last appeal to her tenderness, and after having once revoked the warrant, she ordered the execution to proceed. It was not till the axe had absolutely fallen that the world could believe that Elizabeth would take the life of Essex. Raleigh incurred the deepest odium for his share in bringing his noble rival to the block. He had witnessed his execution from the armoury in the Tower,* and soon after was found in the presence of the queen, who, as if nothing of painful import had occurred, was that morning amusing herself with playing on the virginals.

When the news was officially announced that the tragedy was over, there was a dead silence in the privy chamber, but the queen continued to play, and the Earl of Oxford, casting a significant glance at Raleigh, observed, as if in reference to the effect of her majesty's fingers on the instrument, which was a sort of open spinnet, "When Jacks start up, then heads go down." Every one understood the bitter pun contained in this allusion. Raleigh was on the scaffold when Sir Christopher Blount and Sir Charles Danvers were beheaded, March 17th. Blount was the third husband of Queen Elizabeth's cousin Lettice, Countess of Leicester. If this lady had incurred the ill-will of her royal kinswoman, as generally supposed, by rivalling her in the regard of Leicester, it must be acknowledged that Elizabeth paid the long-delayed debt of vengeance with dreadful interest when she sent both son and husband to the block within one little month."†

Elizabeth caused a declaration of the treasons of Essex to be

* As Captain of the Guard, Raleigh's presence at the execution was his official duty.—ED.

† See Appendix. Note I. Essex's Fall.

published, and a sermon very defamatory to his memory to be preached at Paul's Cross by Dr. Barlowe, but the people took both in evil part. It was observed, withal, that her appearance in public was no longer greeted with tokens of popular applause. Her subjects could not forgive her the death of their idol. Fickle as the populace have proverbially been considered, their affection for the favourite had been of a more enduring nature than that of the sovereign.

The death of Essex left Sir Robert Cecil without a rival in the Court or Cabinet, and he soon established himself as the all-powerful ruler of the realm. Essex had made full confession of his secret correspondence with the King of Scots, and also of the agent through whom it was carried on ; and Cecil lost no time in following the same course and through the same channel. As long as he had hopes of obtaining the hand of Lady Arabella Stuart, he had secretly advanced her pretensions to the succession ; but when it was known that this high-born young lady had bestowed her heart on Lord Beauchamp, the offspring of the calamitous marriage of the Earl of Hertford and Lady Katharine Grey, the unprincipled statesman whose politics were as crooked as his person did all he could to poison the mind of his jealous sovereign against the innocent girl. In one of the private letters in his correspondence with James, the malign hunchback speaks with all the bitterness of a despised and disappointed man of her to whose hand he, the grandson of a tailor, had presumed to aspire, as "Shrewsbury's idol, who," continues he, "if she follow some men's counsel, will be made higher by as many steps as will lead her to the scaffold."

The first result of Cecil's secret understanding with the King of Scots was an addition of two thousand pounds a year to the annual pension which that monarch received from queen Elizabeth ; and this was sorely against the will of the aged sovereign, who at that very time had been compelled by the destitute state of her exchequer to borrow money on her jewels. The flattery of Cecil, however, and the reverential deference with which he approached her made him necessary to her comfort, now that she was in the sear and withered leaf of life, with no

faithful or tender ties of love or friendship to cheer and support her in her lonely passage to the tomb.

In August of this year of 1601 Queen Elizabeth, understanding that Henry IV. of France was at Calais, made a progress to Dover in the hope of tempting him to cross the Channel to pay his compliments to her in person. She had previously dispatched a letter to him by Lord Edmonds, full of friendly expressions and offers of service; and when she reached Dover, she sent Sir Robert Sidney with another, entreating the king to allow her the satisfaction of a personal interview, as she greatly desired to see him. Her pride would have been flattered by the visit of a King of France, and such a king as the hero of Navarre, and she omitted nothing that she imagined might induce him to come. Henry, remembering perhaps that the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, not Solomon to her, forfeited his reputation for always yielding due homage to the ladies by excusing himself, under the unanswerable plea of impossibility, from coming to Dover, and courteously invited his good sister to visit him in France. If Elizabeth had been nineteen instead of sixty-nine, he would probably have acted more gallantly.

Many courteous messages and letters passed between Henry and Elizabeth while he remained at Calais and she at Dover. In the beginning of September, Henry sent a grand State embassy to England, headed by his troublesome subject the Duc de Biron, who was accompanied by the Count d'Auvergne, the natural son of Charles IX. of France, and nearly four hundred noblemen and gentlemen of quality. Biron and his immediate suite were lodged in the ancient palace of Richard III., in Bishopsgate Street (Crosby Hall), while in London; but as Elizabeth had commenced her progress into Hampshire on September 5th, which was the day of his arrival, he was soon after invited to join her there, that he might partake of the sylvan sports in which our royal Dian still indulged.

Elizabeth was at that time the guest of the Marquis and Marchioness of Winchester at Basing; she was so well pleased with her entertainment that she tarried there thirteen days, to the great cost of the hospitable marquis, and at her departure

made ten knights, the largest number that she had ever made at one time. She also said "that she had done more than any of her ancestors had ever done, or any other prince in Christendom was able to do—namely, in her Hampshire progress this year, entertained a royal ambassador royally in her subjects' houses."

This month the Spaniards effected a landing in Ireland, and took the town of Kinsale, but were defeated and finally driven out of that realm by the new lord-deputy, Mountjoye. Elizabeth returned to London early in October ; while there she entertained Biron very splendidly, and among other national spectacles she showed him one that must have appalled even the man who had witnessed the horrors of the day of St. Bartholomew. "Holding Biron by the hand," says Perefixe, "she pointed to a number of heads that were planted on the Tower, and told him 'that it was thus they punished traitors in England.'" Not satisfied with calling his attention to this ghastly company, she coolly recounted to him the names of all her subjects whom she had brought to the block, and among these she mentioned the Earl of Essex, whom she had once so passionately loved. This incident it must have been that gave rise to the absurd but not more revolting tale "that she showed Biron the skull of that unfortunate nobleman, which," it was said, "she always kept in her closet."

The great number of executions for treason in the last thirty years of Elizabeth's reign had indurated her heart by rendering her mind familiar with the most revolting details of torture and blood, and her eyes to objects from which other women not only turn with shuddering horror, but at which they sicken and swoon if accidentally presented to their view ; but Elizabeth could not cross London Bridge without recognising the features of gentlemen whom she had consigned to the axe or the halter. The walls of her royal residence, the Tower, were also converted into a Golgotha, and fearful it must have been for the ladies of her household and Court to behold these mangled relics from day to day,

"While darkly they faded
Through all the dread stages of nature's decay."

Hentzner affirms "that he counted on London bridge no less

than three hundred heads of persons who had been executed for high treason"—a melancholy evidence that Elizabeth, in her latter years, had flung the dove from her sceptre and exchanged curtana for the sword of vengeance.

Sully, the great panegyrist of Elizabeth, and the personal foe of Biron, relates that Biron had a most extraordinary conversation with that queen, and that he had the want of tact not only to mention the Earl of Essex to her, but to bewail the fate of that nobleman, whose great services had not been able to preserve him from so tragical a fate. Elizabeth condescended to justify her conduct by explaining to Biron the nature of the perilous schemes in which Essex had madly engaged, which rendered it necessary for her to punish him. She, however, added, "that notwithstanding his engaging in open rebellion, he might still, by submission, have obtained her pardon, but that neither his friends nor relations could prevail on him to ask it." She, it seems, was well aware of the proceedings of Biron himself, and it is supposed that as a warning to him she enlarged much on the reverence and obedience that was due from subjects to their sovereigns. It might possibly have been that in the climax of the excitement caused by this discussion she showed Biron the heads of the unfortunate adherents of Essex on the Tower as a terrific evidence of the evil consequences of his reckless courses to his friends. Perefice observes "that those who stood by and heard what the Queen of England said to Biron on this occasion, recalled the circumstances to mind when they soon after saw him fall into the same misfortune as the Earl of Essex, by losing his head after he had lost the favour of his prince."

Elizabeth summoned her last Parliament to meet at Westminster on October 27th, 1601. She opened it in person with unwonted pomp, but her enfeebled frame was unable to support the weight of the royal robes, and she was actually sinking to the ground when the nearest nobleman caught and supported her in his arms. Yet she rallied her expiring energies, and went through the fatiguing ceremonial with her wonted dignity and grace.

The sessions commenced with a stormy discussion on mono-

polies, which had now increased to so oppressive a degree that the sole right to sell or issue licences for the sale of wine, vinegar, oil, salt, starch, steel, coals, and almost every necessary of life was vested in the person of some greedy, unprincipled courtier or wealthy individual who had purchased that privilege from the minister or ladies of the bedchamber. The time had arrived when the people of England would bear this grievance no longer. The exigencies of the Government required an extraordinary supply to carry on the expenses of the civil war in Ireland, and the Commons chose to discuss the monopoly question first, but the queen prevented this exposure of the abuses of her Government by sending a most gracious and conciliatory message to the House signifying her intention of redressing all grievances by the exercise of her regal authority. The Commons' deputation of 140 members, with their Speaker, waited upon her to return thanks, and she addressed them at some length, expressing her affection for her people and her satisfaction "that the harpies and horse-leeches," as she in her energetic phraseology termed the monopolists, had been exposed to her.

"I had rather," said she, "that my heart and hand should perish than either heart or hand should allow such privileges to monopolists as may be prejudicial to my people. The splendour of regal majesty hath not so blinded mine eyes that licentious power should prevail with me more than justice. The glory of the name of a king may deceive those princes that know not how to rule, as gilded pills may deceive a sick patient. But I am none of those princes. For I know that the commonwealth is to be governed for the good and advantage of those that are committed to me, not of myself, to whom it is intrusted, and that an account is one day to be given before another judgment-seat. I think myself most happy that, by God's assistance, I have hitherto so prosperously governed the commonwealth in all respects, and that I have such subjects that for their good I would willingly lose both kingdoms and life." She concluded this beautiful speech, the last she ever addressed to her senate, by entreating them "not to impute the blame to her if they had suffered from the abuses of which they complained, for

princes' servants were too often set more upon their private advantage than the good of either the sovereign or the people."

The Parliament returned the most dutiful acknowledgments, and after granting an extraordinary supply was dissolved in November, having scarcely sat six weeks. It was the last of Elizabeth's reign.

It has been observed that after the death of Essex the people ceased to greet the queen with the demonstrations of rapturous affection with which they had been accustomed to salute her when she appeared in public. They could not forgive the loss of that generous and gallant nobleman, the only popular object of her favour, whom she had cut off in the flower of his days, and now, whenever she was seen, a gloomy silence reigned in the streets through which she passed. These indications of the change in her subjects' feelings towards her are said to have sunk deeply into the mind of the aged queen and occasioned that depression of spirits which preceded her death.

A trifling incident is also supposed to have made a painful and ominous impression on her imagination. Her coronation ring, which she had worn night and day ever since her inauguration, having grown into her finger, it became necessary to have it filed off; and this was regarded by her as an evil portent.

In the beginning of June she confided to the French ambassador, Count de Beaumont, "that she was a-weary of life," and with sighs and tears alluded to the death of Essex, that subject which appears to have been ever in her thoughts, and "when unthought of, still the spring of thought." She said "that, being aware of the impetuosity of his temper and his ambitious character, she had warned him two years before to content himself with pleasing her, and not to show such insolent contempt for her as he did on some occasions, but to take care not to touch her sceptre, lest she should be compelled to punish him according to the laws of England, and not according to her own, which he had always found too mild and indulgent for him to fear anything from them. His neglect of this caution," she added, "had caused his ruin."

Henry IV., notwithstanding the earnest intercessions he had made, through his ambassador, for the life of Essex, greatly applauded Elizabeth for her resolution in bringing him to the block, and observed "that if his predecessor, Henry III., had possessed a portion of her high spirit, he would have quelled the insolence of the Duke of Guise and his faction in their first attempts to overawe the throne." He said many times, in the presence of his Court, that "she only was a king, and knew how to govern—how to support the dignity of her crown ; and that the repose and weal of her subjects required the course she had taken."

Elizabeth appears to have felt differently on this subject, which pressed heavily on her mind ; perhaps more so than many a less justifiable act of severity, as the deaths of the Duke of Norfolk and the Queen of Scots. But this was the drop that surcharged the cup ; and the infirmities of frail humanity warned her that the hour was not far distant when she must render up an account for the blood she had shed ; and however satisfactory her reasons for what she had done might have appeared to other sovereigns and to her partial subjects, neither expediency nor sophistry would avail aught at the tribunal where the secrets of all hearts are unveiled. Besides, she had hitherto destroyed her enemies, or those whom she deemed the friends of her foes. Now she had taken the life of her nearest kinsman and best-loved friend, of him whom she had cherished in his early youth with the tenderness of a mother, and after he advanced to manhood regarded with the perilous fondness of a jealous lover.

One of the members of Elizabeth's household gives the following account of the state of the queen's mind in a letter to a confidential correspondent in the service of her successor :—

'Our queen is troubled with a rheum in her arm, which vexeth her very much, besides the grief she hath conceived for my Lord of Essex's death. She sleepeth not so much by day as she used, neither taketh rest by night. Her delight is to sit in the dark, and sometimes with shedding tears to bewail Essex.'

These fits of despondency occasionally cleared away ; and we find Elizabeth exhibiting fits of active mirthfulness, especially at

the expense of her dwarfish premier, Cecil, who habitually played the lover to her majesty.

Cecil was, however, at that time the creature of the expectant and impatient heir of his royal mistress, with whom he maintained almost a daily correspondence. One day a packet from King James was delivered to him in the presence of the queen, which he knew contained allusions to his secret practices with her successor. Elizabeth's quick eye doubtless detected the furtive glance which taught him to recognise that it was a dangerous missive ; and she ordered him instantly to open and show the contents of his letters to her. A timely recollection of one of her weak points saved the wily minister from detection. "This packet," said he, as he slowly drew forth his knife and prepared to cut the strings which fastened it,—this packet has a strange and evil smell. Surely it has not been in contact with infected persons or goods." Elizabeth's dread of contagion prevailed over both curiosity and suspicion, and she hastily ordered Cecil to throw it at a distance, and not bring it into her presence again till it had been thoroughly fumigated. He of course took care to purify it of the evidences of his own guilty deeds.

James I. obtained a great ascendancy in the councils of Elizabeth during the last years of her life, although the fact was far from suspected by the declining queen, who all the while flattered herself that it was she who, from the secret recesses of her closet, governed the realm of Scotland and controlled the actions of her royal successor. The circumstance of his being her successor, however, gave James that power in his reversionary realm of England, of which he afterwards boasted to the great Sully, the ambassador from France, telling him "that it was he who actually governed England for several years before the death of Elizabeth, having gained all her ministers, who were guided by his directions in all things."

It is by Lady Southwell, one of Queen Elizabeth's ladies immediately about her person, that the melancholy marvels attending her death are recorded. This narrative is still in existence in the original MSS., the costume of place, time, and diurnal routine rendering it a precious document. After making

every allowance for the credulousness of the writer, it evidently depicts the departure of a person unsettled in religion and uneasy in conscience.

“ Her majesty,” says Lady Southwell, “ being in very good health one day, Sir John Stanhope, vice-chamberlain, and Sir Robert Cecil’s dependent and familiar, came and presented her majesty with a piece of gold, of the bigness of an angel, full of characters, which he said an old woman in Wales had bequeathed to her (the queen) on her deathbed, and thereupon he discoursed how the said testatrix, by virtue of the piece of gold, lived to the age of 120 years, and in that age, having all her body withered and consumed, and wanting Nature to nourish her, she died, commanding the said piece of gold to be carefully sent to her majesty, alleging, further, that as long as she wore it on her body she could not die. The queen in confidence took the said gold, and hung it about her neck.” This fine story has crept very widely into history, and even into ambassadors’ despatches ; but the genealogy of the magic piece of gold has never before been duly defined. There can be little doubt that Elizabeth and her minister were absurd enough to accept the talisman, but its adoption was followed by a general breaking up of her constitution, instead of its renewal. “ Though she became not suddenly sick, yet she daily decreased of her rest and feeding, and within fifteen days,” continues Lady Southwell, “ she fell downright ill, and the cause being wondered at by my Lady Scrope, with whom she was very private and confidant, being her near kinswoman, her majesty told her (commanding her to conceal the same) ‘ that she saw one night her own body exceedingly lean and fearful in a light of fire.’ This vision was at Whitehall, a little before she departed for Richmond, and was testified by another lady, who was one of the nearest about her person, of whom the queen demanded ‘ Whether she was not wont to see sights in the night ? ’ telling her of the bright flame she had seen.” This is a common deception of the sight in a highly vitiated state of bile ; but in the commencement of the 17th century, educated individuals were as ignorant of physiology as infants of three years old of the present day ; these imaginative vagaries are very precious, as

proofs of the gradual progress of knowledge and its best result, wisdom. The next anecdote, however, goes far beyond all our present discoveries in optics :

“Afterwards, in the melancholy of her sickness, she desired to see a *true* looking-glass, which in twenty years before she had not seen, but only such a one as on purpose was made to deceive her sight, which true looking-glass being brought her, she presently fell exclaiming at all those flatterers which had so much commended her, and they durst not after come into her presence.” Her attendants had doubtless left off painting her, and she happened to see her natural face in the glass.

A fearful complication of complaints had settled on the queen, and began to draw visibly to a climax. She suffered greatly with the gout in her hands and fingers, but was never heard to complain of what she felt in the way of personal pain, but continued to talk of progresses and festivities, as though she expected her days to be prolonged through years to come.

On January 14th, the queen having sickened two days before of a cold, removed to Richmond, which, she said, “was the warm winter-box to shelter her old age.” The morning before she departed, her kinsman, the lord admiral, coming to her to receive her orders, partly concerning the removal and partly touching other matters, she fell into some speech touching the succession, and then told him “that her throne had always been the throne of kings, and none but her next heir of blood and descent should succeed.” This proves that Elizabeth, however jealous she might be of James during her life, had no wish to entail the legacy of a civil war on her people by changing the legitimate order of the succession. Her displeasure against those who might pretend to set up a rival claim to the elder line was sufficiently indicated by the acrimonious manner in which she named the son of Lady Katharine Grey and her imprisonment of the innocent Lady Arabella Stuart at Sheriff Hutton. Elizabeth removed on a wet, stormy day to Richmond ; and when she first arrived, the change of air appeared to have had a salutary effect, for she was well amended of her cold ; but on February 28th she began to sicken again.

All contemporary writers bear witness to the increased dejection

of her mind after visiting her dying kinswoman, the Countess of Nottingham ; but the particulars of that visit rest on historical tradition only. It is said that the countess, pressed in conscience on account of her detention of the ring which Essex had sent to the queen as an appeal to her mercy, could not die in peace until she had revealed the truth to her majesty and craved her pardon. But Elizabeth, in a transport of mingled grief and fury, shook, or, as others have said, struck the dying penitent in her bed, with these words, "God may forgive you, but I never can !"

The death-bed confession of the Countess of Nottingham gave a rude shock to the fast-ebbing sands of the sorrow-stricken queen. Her distress on that occasion, though the circumstances which caused it were not generally known till more than a century afterwards, is mentioned by de Beaumont, the French ambassador, in a letter to Monsieur de Villeroy, in which he informs him "that, having received the letter from the king his master, he requested an audience of the queen, in order to present it, but she desired to be excused on account of the death of the Countess of Nottingham, for which she had wept extremely and shown an uncommon concern."

It is almost a fearful task to trace the passage of the mighty Elizabeth through the "dark valley of the shadow of death." Many have been dazzled with the splendour of her life, but few, even of her most ardent admirers, would wish their last end might be like hers.

Robert Carey, afterwards Earl of Monmouth, was admitted to the chamber of his royal kinswoman during her last illness, and has left the following pathetic record of the state in which he found her :—

"When I came to Court," says he, "I found the queen ill-disposed, and she kept her inner lodging ; yet, hearing of my arrival, she sent for me. I found her in one of her withdrawing-chambers, sitting low upon her cushions. She called me to her ; I kissed her hand, and told her it was my chiefest happiness to see her in safety and in health, which I wished might long continue. She took me by the hand, and wrung it hard, and said, 'No, Robin, *I am not well* ; and then discoursed to me of her

indisposition, and that her heart had been sad and heavy for ten or twelve days, and in her discourse she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs. I was grieved at the first to see her in this plight, for in all my lifetime before I never saw her fetch a sigh but when the Queen of Scots was beheaded. Then, upon my knowledge, she shed many sighs and tears, manifesting her innocence that she never gave consent to the death of that queen. I used the best words I could to persuade her from this melancholy humour, but I found it was too deep-rooted in her heart, and hardly to be removed. This was upon a Saturday night, and she gave command that the great closet should be prepared for her to go to chapel the next morning. The next day, all things being in readiness, we long expected her coming.

"After eleven o'clock, one of the grooms (of the chambers) came out, and bade make ready for the private closet, for she would not go to the great. There we stayed long for her coming; but at the last she had cushions laid for her in the privy chamber, hard by the closet door, and there she heard the service. From that day forward she grew worse and worse; she remained upon her cushions four days and nights at the least. All about her could not persuade her either to take any sustenance or to go to bed."

Beaumont, the French ambassador, affords a yet more gloomy picture of the sufferings of mind and body which rendered the progress of the "dreaded and dreadful Elizabeth" to the tomb an awful lesson on the vanity of all earthly distinctions and glories in the closing stage of life, when nothing but the witness of a good conscience and a holy reliance on the mercy of a Redeemer's love can enable shrinking nature to contemplate with hope and comfort the dissolution of its earthly tabernacle.

On March 19th de Beaumont informs the king his master "that Queen Elizabeth had been very much indisposed for the last fourteen days, having scarcely slept at all during that period, and eaten much less than usual, being seized with such a restlessness that, though she had no decided fever, she felt a great heat in her stomach and a continual thirst, which obliged her every moment to take something to abate it, and to prevent the

phlegm with which she was sometimes oppressed from choking her. Some ascribed her disorder to her uneasiness with regard to Lady Arabella Stuart ; others to her having been obliged by her council to grant a pardon to her Irish rebel, Tyrone. Many were of opinion that her distress of mind was caused by the death of Essex ; but all agreed that before her illness became serious she discovered an unusual melancholy both in her countenance and manner." "The queen," says another contemporary, "had fallen into a state of moping, sighing, and weeping melancholy ; and being asked by her attendants ' Whether she had any secret cause of grief ? ' she replied ' that she knew of nothing in this world worthy of troubling her. ' " She was obstinate in refusing everything prescribed by her physicians.

Three days after, Beaumont wrote " that the Queen of England had been somewhat better the day before, but was that day worse, and so full of chagrin and so weary of life that, notwithstanding all the entreaties of her councillors and physicians for her to take the proper medicine and means necessary for her relief, she refused everything."

"The queen grew worse and worse," says her kinsman, Sir Robert Carey, "because she would be so—none about her being able to persuade her to go to bed." A general report of her death prevailed not only in her own dominions, but on the Continent, as we find by the reports of de Beaumont, the French ambassador.

On Wednesday the lord admiral was sent for as the person who possessed the most influence with the queen ; he was one of her nearest surviving kinsmen, being the first-cousin of Queen Anne Boleyn, whose mother, the Lady Elizabeth Howard, was his father's sister. He had also married a Carey, the granddaughter of the Queen's aunt, Mary Boleyn. He was then in great affliction for the death of his lady, and had retired from the Court to indulge his grief in privacy, for the sight of *doole* (mourning) was as distasteful to Queen Elizabeth as to her father. She was aware that those about her anticipated a fatal termination to her present malady, and felt in herself the

unmistakable symptoms of the slow but sure approach of death, and though she had, with sighs and tears, acknowledged herself weary of life, there was a fearful shrinking manifested when she found herself actually poised on the narrow threshold that divides time from eternity ; and as if she thought that her reluctance to cross that awful bond would alter the immutable decree that had gone forth against her, she refused to admit her danger, or to do anything which bore the appearance of death-bed preparations.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and Cecil entreated her to receive medical aid, but she angrily told them "that she knew her own constitution better than they did, and that she was not in so much danger as they imagined." The admiral came and knelt beside her, where she sat among her cushions sullen and unresigned ; he kissed her hands, and with tears implored her to take a little nourishment. After much ado he prevailed so far that she received a little broth from his hands, he feeding her with a spoon. But when he urged her to go to bed, she angrily refused, and then in wild and wandering words hinted of phantasma that had troubled her midnight couch. "If he were in the habit of seeing such things in his bed," she said, "as she did when in hers, he would not persuade her to go there." Secretary Cecil, overhearing this speech, asked "If her majesty had seen any spirits ?" A flash of Elizabeth's mighty mind for an instant triumphed over the wreck of her bodily and mental faculties ; she knew the man, and was aware he had been truckling with her successor. He was not in her confidence, and she answered majestically, "she scorned to answer him *such* a question !" But Cecil's pertness was not subdued by the lion-like mien of dying majesty, and he told her that "to content the people, she *must* go to bed." At which she smiled, wonderfully contemning him, observing, "the word *must* was not to be used to princes," adding, "Little man, little man, if your father had lived, ye durst not have said so much, but ye know I must die, and that makes ye so presumptuous." She then commanded him and the rest to depart out of her chamber, all but Lord Admiral Howard, to whom, as her near relation and fast friend through

life, she was confidential to the last, even regarding those unreal phantasms, which, when her great mind awoke for a moment, it is plain she referred to their proper causes. When Cecil and his colleagues were gone, the queen, shaking her head piteously, said to her brave kinsman, "My lord, I am tied with a chain of iron about my neck."

The lord admiral reminded her of her wonted courage, but she replied desponding, "I am tied, I am tied, and the case is altered with me." The queen understood that Secretary Cecil had given forth to the people that she was mad; therefore in her sickness she did many times say to him, "Cecil, I know I am not mad; you must not think to make Queen Jane of me." She evidently alluded to the unfortunate Queen-regnant of Castille, the mad Joanna, mother of Charles V., whose sad life as a regal maniac was fresh in the memory of her dying contemporary.

Her ladies, however, bear firm witness to her sanity, "for," says Lady Southwell, "though many reports, by Cecil's means, were spread of her distraction, neither myself nor any other lady about her could ever perceive that her speeches, ever well applied, proceeded from a distracted mind." Partly by the admiral's persuasions and partly by force, she was at length carried to bed, but there she lay not long, for again the French ambassador informs the king his master "that the queen continued to grow worse, and appeared in a manner insensible, not speaking above once in two or three hours, and at last remained silent for four-and-twenty, holding her finger almost continually in her mouth, with her rayless eyes open, and fixed on the ground, where she sat on cushions, without rising or resting herself, and was greatly emaciated by her long watching and fasting."

Some attempt appears to have been made to charm away the dark spirit that had come over the queen by the power of melody at this dread crisis; for Beaumont says, "This morning the queen's music has gone to her." He sarcastically adds, "I believe she means to die as gaily as she has lived." In his next report he says, "The queen hastens to her end, and is given up by all her physicians. They have put her to bed almost by force, after she had sat upon cushions for ten days, and has rested

barely an hour each day in her clothes." After she was undressed and placed more at her ease, in a recumbent posture, she revived and called for broth, and seemed so much better that hopes were entertained of her, but soon after she became speechless. When she found herself failing, she desired some meditations to be read to her, and named those of Du Plessis de Mornaye. Yet more, alas ! of superstition than devotion appears to have attended the last days of this mighty victress—mighty queen ; and gloomy indeed were the clouds in which she, who had been proudly styled "the western luminary," set at last. If we may credit the details of Lady Southwell, who has recorded every circumstance of her royal mistress's last illness with graphic minuteness, some singular traits of weakness were exhibited by Elizabeth, and before the testimony of this daily witness of the occurrences of that epoch be rejected, the reader must bear in mind Elizabeth's well-authenticated practices with the astrologer Dee.

Lady Southwell affirms "that the two ladies-in-waiting discovered the queen of hearts with a nail of iron knocked through the forehead, and thus fastened to the bottom of her majesty's chair ; they durst not pull it out, remembering that the like thing was used to the old Countess of Sussex, and afterwards proved a witchcraft, for which certain persons were hanged, as instruments of the same." It was perfectly inconsequential whether the queen of hearts or any other bit of card was nailed at the bottom of the queen's chair ; but the fantastical idea of putting it there, and the terror of the poor ladies who would, but durst not, remove it because of the horrid sacrifice of human life that attended all suspicion of witchcraft, are lively illustrations of the characteristics of that era. As the mortal illness of the queen drew towards its close, the superstitious fears of her simple ladies were excited almost to mania, even to conjuring up a spectral apparition of the queen while she was yet alive. Lady Guildford, then in waiting on the queen, and leaving her in an almost breathless sleep in her privy chamber, went out to take a little air, and met her majesty, as she thought, three or four chambers off. Alarmed at the thoughts of being discovered in the act of leaving the royal patient alone, she hurried forward in some

trepidation, in order to excuse herself, when the apparition vanished away. Lady Guildford returned, terrified, to the chamber, but there lay Queen Elizabeth, still in the same lethargic, motionless slumber in which she had left her.

On March 24th Beaumont, the French ambassador, made the following report of the state of the departing monarch :—"The queen was given up three days ago ; she had lain long in a cold sweat and had not spoken. A short time previously she said, 'I wish not to live any longer, but desire to die.' Yesterday and the day before she began to rest, and found herself better after, having been greatly relieved by the bursting of a small swelling in the throat. She takes no medicine whatever and has only kept her bed two days ; before this she would on no account suffer it, for fear (as some suppose) of a prophecy that she should die in her bed. She is, moreover, said to be no longer in her right senses ; this, however, is a mistake ; she has only had some slight wanderings at intervals."

Carey reports the last change for the worse to have taken place on Wednesday, the previous day :—"That afternoon," says he, "she made signs for her council to be called, and by putting her hand to her head when the King of Scotland was named to succeed her, they all knew he was the man she desired should reign after her." By what logic the council were able to interpret this motion of the dying queen into an indication that such was her pleasure, they best could explain. Lady Southwell's account of this memorable scene is more circumstantial and minute. She says of the queen :—

"Being given over by all and at the last gasp, keeping still her sense in everything, and giving apt answers, though she spake but seldom, having then a sore throat, the council required admittance, and she wished to wash (gargle) her throat, that she might answer freely to what they demanded, which was to know whom she would have for king?"—a servile and unconstitutional question which it is well no sovereign is expected to answer in these better days. Her throat troubling her much, they desired her to hold up her finger when they named who she liked ; whereupon they named the King of France (this was to try her

intellect)—she never stirred ; the King of Scotland—she made no sign ; then they named Lord Beauchamp. This was the heir of Seymour, whose rights were derived from his mother, Lady Katharine Grey, one of the most unfortunate of Elizabeth's victims. Anger awakened the failing mind of the expiring queen, she roused herself at the name of the injured person, whom she could not forgive, and said fiercely, "I will have no rascal's son in my seat, but one worthy to be a king." How sad is the scene—what a dismal view of regality the various versions of this death-bed present ! where the interested courtiers sat watching the twitchings of the hands, and the tossing of the arms of the dying Elizabeth, interpreting them into signs of royalty for the expectant heir. In her last struggles, the clasping of her convulsed hands over her brow is seriously set forth as her symbolical intimation that her successor was to be a crowned king !

"The queen kept her bed fifteen days," continues Lady Southwell, "besides the three days she sat upon a stool ; and one day when, being pulled up by force, she obstinately stood on her feet for fifteen hours." When she was near her end, the council sent to her the Archbishop of Canterbury and other prelates, at the sight of whom she was much offended, cholerically rating them, "bidding them be packing," saying "she was no atheist, but she knew full well they were but hedge-priests." That Elizabeth in the aberration of delirium or the petulance of sickness might have used such a speech is possible ; but her reluctance to receive spiritual assistance from the hierarchy of her own Church is not mentioned by the French ambassador ; and Carey assures us "that about six at night she made signs for the Archbishop of Canterbury and her chaplains to come to her. At which time," says he, "I went in with them, and sat upon my knees, full of tears to see that heavy sight. Her majesty lay upon her back, with one hand in the bed and the other without. The bishop knelt down by her, and examined her first of her faith ; and she so punctually answered all his several questions by lifting up her eyes and holding up her hand, as it was a comfort to all the beholders. Then the good man told her plainly what she was and what she was to come to, and though she had been long a

great queen here upon earth, yet shortly she was to yield an account of her stewardship to the great King of kings." The following striking anecdote is related by the learned author of *L'Art de Verifier les Dates* in connexion with this memorable scene ; but it is scarcely in accordance with Carey's record of the archbishop's apostolical address to the queen, and still less with the fact that she was speechless. The incident must, however, be related, because it is deeply interesting, if true :—

"The Archbishop of Canterbury," says our authority, "who assisted her last moments with his consolations, said to her, 'Madam, you ought to hope much in the mercy of God. Your piety, your zeal, and the admirable work of the Reformation, which you have happily established, afford great grounds of confidence for you.' 'My lord,' replied the queen, 'the crown which I have borne so long has given enough of vanity in my time. I beseech you not to augment it in this hour, when I am so near my death.'"

"After this," continues Carey, "he began to pray, and all that were by did answer him. After he had continued long in prayer, the old man's knees were weary : he blessed her, and meant to rise and leave her. The queen made a sign with her hand. My sister Scrope, knowing her meaning, told the bishop the queen desired he would pray still. He did so for a long half-hour after, and then thought to leave her." Elizabeth, speechless, agonising, and aware of the utter inefficiency of the aid of the physician or the nurse, was eager now for spiritual medicine. She had tasted in that dark hour of the waters of life, and the thirst of the immortal spirit was not lightly satiated—the weakness of the dissolving tabernacle of feeble clay was forgotten. She made, a second time, a sign to have the archbishop continue in prayer. He did so for half an hour more, "with earnest cries to God for her soul's health, which he uttered with that fervency of spirit that the queen, to all our sight, much rejoiced thereat," continues the eye-witness of this impressive scene, "and gave testimony to us all of her Christian and comfortable end. By this time it grew late, and every one departed, all but the women who attended her."

"This," pursues he, "that I heard with my ears and did see

with mine eyes, I thought it my duty to set down, and to affirm it for a truth upon the faith of a Christian, because I know there have been many false lies reported of the end and death of that good lady." As those of a trusted and beloved kinsman of Elizabeth, the statements of Sir Robert Carey are doubtless of great importance. Few indeed of those who are admitted to visit the death-beds of sovereigns have left such graphic records of their last hours. It is melancholy to add that there is every reason to believe that while death was thus dealing with the aged queen, this very Carey and his sister, Lady Scrope, were intently watching the ebbing-tide of life for the purpose of being the first to hail the impatient King of Scots as her successor.

The spirit of the mighty Elizabeth, after all, passed away so quietly that the vigilance of the self-interested spies by whom she was surrounded was baffled, and no one knew the moment of her departure. Exhausted by her devotions, she had, after the archbishop left her, sunk into a deep sleep, from which she never awoke; and about three in the morning it was discovered that she had ceased to breathe. Lady Scrope gave the first intelligence of this fact by silently dropping a sapphire ring to her brother, who was lurking beneath the windows of the chamber of death at Richmond Palace. This ring, long after known in Court tradition as the "blue ring," had been confided to Lady Scrope by James as a certain signal which was to announce the decease of the queen. Sir Robert Carey caught the token, fraught with the destiny of the island empire, and departed at fiery speed to announce the tidings in Scotland.

Carey gives us a very different account of his proceedings in his autobiography. He affirms that after he had assisted at the last prayers for his dying mistress he returned to his lodging, leaving word with one in the cofferer's chamber to call him if it was thought the queen would die, and that he gave the porter an angel to let him in at any time when he called. Early on the Thursday morning the sentinel he had left in the cofferer's chamber brought him word that the queen was dead. "I rose," says he, "and made all the haste to the gate to get in. I was answered I could not enter—all the lords of the council having

been there, and commanded that none should go in or out but by warrant from them. At the very instant one of the council, the comptroller, asked if I were at the gate. I answered 'Yes,' and desired to know how the queen did ; he answered, 'Pretty well.' " When Carey was admitted, he found all the ladies in the cofferer's chamber weeping bitterly—a more touching tribute, perhaps, to the memory of their royal mistress than all the pompous and elaborate lamentations that the poets and poetasters of the age laboured to bestow on her, in illustration of the grief which was supposed to pervade all hearts throughout the realm at her decease.

This great female sovereign died in the seventieth year of her age and the forty-fourth of her reign. She was born on the day celebrated as the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, and she died on March 24th, on the eve of the Festival of the Annunciation, called Lady Day. Among the complimentary epitaphs which were composed for her and hung up in many churches was one ending with the following couplet :—

"She is, she was—what can there more be said?
On earth the first, in heaven the second maid."

Queen Elizabeth was most royally interred in Westminster Abbey on April 28th, 1603, "at which time," says old Stow, "the city of Westminster was surcharged with multitudes of all sorts of people, in the streets, houses, windows, leads, and gutters, who came to see the obsequy ; and when they beheld her statue, or effigy, lying on the coffin, set forth in royal robes, having a crown upon the head thereof, and a ball and sceptre in either hand, there was such a general sighing, groaning, and weeping as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man, neither doth any history mention any people, time, or state to make like lamentation for the death of their sovereign."

Elizabeth was interred in the same grave with her sister and predecessor in the regal office, Mary Tudor. Her successor, King James I., has left a lasting evidence of his good taste and good feeling in the noble monument he erected to her memory in Westminster Abbey. Her recumbent effigies repose beneath

a stately canopy on a slab of pure white marble, which is supported by four lions. Her head rests on tasselled and embroidered cushions, her feet on a couchant lion. She is mantled in her royal robes, lined with ermine, and attired in fardingale and ruff, but there is almost a classical absence of ornament in her dress. Her closely curled hair is covered with a very simple cap, though of the regal form, but she has no crown, and the sceptre has been broken from her hand, so has the cross from the imperial orb which she holds in the other. She was the last sovereign of this country to whom a monument has been given, but one of the few whose glory required it not.

CHRONOLOGY

A.D.	MONTH	AGE	
1533	Sept. 7		Birth of Elizabeth.
1536		2	Trial and execution of Anne Boleyn.
1536			Henry VIII. marries Jane Seymour.
1537		4	Birth of Edward VI. Death of Jane Seymour.
1538		5	Suppression of the Monasteries.
1540		7	Henry marries Anne of Cleves. Marriage dissolved. Henry marries Katharine Howard.
1542		9	Execution of Katharine Howard.
1542			Birth of Mary Stuart.
1543		10	Henry marries Katharine Parr.
1547	Jan.	13	Death of Henry VIII. Accession of Edward VI.
1547	Feb.		Sir Thomas Seymour offers Elizabeth marriage. Marries Katharine Parr.
1548	May	14	Elizabeth removed from Katharine Parr's guardianship.
1548	Sept.	15	Death of Katharine Parr.
1548			Seymour again Elizabeth's suitor. He is attainted and executed.
1551	March	17	Elizabeth visits Edward VI. in state.
1552		18	Execution of Somerset.
1553	July	19	Death of Edward VI. Accession of Mary.
1553			Execution of Northumberland.
1554	Jan.	20	Wyat's rebellion.
1554	Feb.		Execution of Lady Jane Grey.
1554	March		Elizabeth committed to the Tower.
1554	April		Execution of Wyat.
1554	May		Elizabeth removed from the Tower.
1554	Dec.	21	Reconciliation with Mary.
1558	Nov.	25	Death of Mary. Accession of Elizabeth.
1559	Jan.		Coronation. Meeting of Elizabeth's first Parliament.
1560	Dec.	27	Death of Francis II.
1565	July	31	Marriage of Mary Stuart and Darnley.
1566	June	32	Birth of James I.

A.D.	MONTH	AGE	
1567	Feb.	33	Murder of Darnley.
1568	May	34	Mary takes refuge in England. Her imprisonment.
1569	Nov.	36	Northern rebellion.
1570	May		Excommunication of Elizabeth by Pius V.
1570		37	Projected marriage of Elizabeth with Duke of Anjou.
1571	Jan.		Elizabeth opens the Royal Exchange.
1571			Ridolfi's plot.
1572	June	38	Duke of Norfolk beheaded.
1572			Marriage project with Alençon.
1572	Aug.		Massacre of St. Bartholomew.
1574		40	Death of Charles IX. Accession of Henry III.
1575		41	Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth.
1582	Nov.	49	Conclusion of the Alençon project.
1586		53	Death of Sir Philip Sidney.
1586		54	Babington's conspiracy.
1587	Feb.		Mary Stuart beheaded.
1588		55	The Spanish Armada.
1589	April	56	Portuguese Expedition.
1589		57	Assassination of Henry III. Accession of Henry of Navarre.
1595		62	Tyrone's rebellion.
1596	March	63	Cadiz expedition and victory.
1597		64	Islands voyage.
1598		65	Death of Lord Burleigh and of Philip II.
1601	Feb.	68	Execution of Essex.
1601	Oct.	69	Last Parliament of Elizabeth.
1603	March 24	71	Death of Elizabeth.

APPENDIX

AGNES STRICKLAND AND HER WORK

AGNES STRICKLAND was born in London in 1796. Descended from a race of Lancashire yeomen, her father had suffered severe pecuniary losses before his death, and the need of supplementing the family income served as additional inducement to Agnes and her sister to turn their literary gifts to financial account. Their publications were many and various, but it is upon the Lives of the Queens of England that the reputation of Agnes Strickland chiefly rests.

Her life of Queen Elizabeth constitutes a remarkable monument of labour and industry. It is difficult, in reading it, to believe that any source of information available at the time was left unexplored. It will remain to the end a valuable means of forming a graphic and life-like conception of the Court with which it deals. It met with a cordial reception, the first edition being sold as soon as it appeared in print.

Miss Strickland lived to be seventy-four, and the year before her death she was still actively engaged in literary labours. She died in 1870, and was buried at Southwold.

She belongs pre-eminently to the class of writers whose special talent lies in the collection of material. Her inferences may be obvious, her reasoning inconclusive; but the perseverance and toil represented by the documents she amassed have a perennial value. Methods of writing history may become obsolete, systems of dealing with data and of sifting evidence will change, but the worth of such a work as the present one remains unaffected by changing fashions. It lies, not in the judicial temper and critical faculty in which the writer has been declared lacking, but in the discovery and arrangement of material enabling the student to form conclusions of his own. Those conclusions may differ from Miss Strickland's: she belonged to a time when loyalty was a religion and reverence for the blood royal a creed—a spirit signally

illustrated by the refusal of herself and her sister to include in their *Lives* the biographies of the Brunswick queens, on the ground that such a proceeding "would be disrespectful to their own beloved sovereign," and that it would be impossible, in particular, to describe the relations existing between Queen Caroline, wife of George II., and her son, great-grandfather of Queen Victoria, "without giving offence to her whom they were bound to revere and honour." The passages quoted mark at once the gulf separating Miss Strickland from writers of a later school; but the value of her work is enhanced, rather than the reverse, by her worship of the royal dignity. Nothing, from the gossip of a lacquey to the fashion of a dress, is too trivial to be included in her record. The hero worshipper is in truth the sole biographer who can be trusted to place the reader in a position to make his own selection of facts worth preservation, and students who desire to do this owe Miss Strickland no small debt of gratitude.

NOTE A. ELIZABETH'S CHARACTER.

While the special merit of Miss Strickland's work lies in the multitude of details it contains, it is possible that the elaboration of the portrait may render it difficult to grasp its broader features. It may be found hard, to quote the old saying, to see the wood for the trees. To any readers who are in such a case the description of Queen Elizabeth given by one of the most brilliant of later historians may so far facilitate a clearer conception of the great figure portrayed in the present biography as to be worth summarising here :

"Elizabeth was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn. From her father she inherited her frank and hearty address, her love of popularity and of free intercourse with the people, her dauntless courage and her amazing self-confidence. Her harsh, manlike voice, her impetuous will, her pride, her furious outbursts of anger came to her with her Tudor blood. But strangely in contrast with the violent outlines of her Tudor temper stood the sensuous, self-indulgent nature she derived from Anne Boleyn. Splendour and pleasure were with Elizabeth the very air she breathed. She loved gaiety and laughter and wit. Her vanity remained, even to old age, the vanity of a coquette in her teens. But the wilfulness of Henry, the triviality of Anne Boleyn played over the surface of a nature hard as steel, a temper purely intellectual, the very type of reason untouched by imagination or passion. The coquette of the presence-chamber became the coolest and hardest of politicians at the council board. [Her policy] was a policy, not of genius, but of good sense. Her aims were simple and obvious. Her cold, critical intellect was never swayed by enthusiasm or by panic either to exaggerate

or to under-estimate her risks or her power. . . . The greatness of the queen rests, above all, on her power over her people. We have had grander and nobler rulers, but none so popular as Elizabeth."—*Summarised from J. R. Green's Short History of the English People.*

NOTE B, page 25. ELIZABETH AND SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR.

It is the opinion of one of Elizabeth's ablest biographers, Bishop Creighton, that Seymour's death, occurring when she was not sixteen, marked "the great crisis in Elizabeth's life, and did more than anything else to form her character." She had loved Seymour, and had given her full confidence and trust to her governess, likewise concerned in the intrigue. By the sequel she was taught the limitations of human trustworthiness and the inevitableness of personal responsibility. "We know," pursues Dr. Creighton, "how thoroughly Elizabeth understood these truths and acted on them later. Her success in so doing was due to the severe teaching of experience."—*Queen Elizabeth.* By Mandell Creighton, pp. 15, 16.

NOTE C, page 153. LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF ELY.

This letter is now known to be a forgery. It is the opinion of Bishop Creighton, at least, that, in spite of the common belief to the contrary, Elizabeth's treatment of bishops was marked by greater respect than that shown to her lay ministers.

NOTE D, page 214. THE CATHOLIC PERSECUTION.

The policy pursued by Elizabeth towards the Catholic emissaries from Rome was justified from her own point of view, even apart from any political bearing of the mission. Their presence was eminently calculated to defeat one of the objects she had most at heart—namely, the gradual and quiet obliteration of the differences dividing the rival Churches. Her system of compromise had promised success to her scheme, until the arrival of the mission priests. "Their presence," says J. R. Green, "was at once felt in the check which it gave to the gradual reconciliation of the Catholic gentry to the English Church." The queen's appreciation of this fact found expression in the Catholic persecution.

NOTE E, page 231. THE FOOL TARLETON.

According to the commoner version of this story, the remark of the fool—"See how the knave commands the queen"—was made as, from behind Elizabeth's chair, he watched the game of cards played by herself and her favourite.

NOTE F, page 258. ELIZABETH'S SIGNATURE TO MARY'S
DEATH-WARRANT.

In a later edition of this work Miss Strickland recorded a change of opinion. She had become convinced that Elizabeth's signature to the warrant for the execution of Mary Stuart was a forgery. Upon her discovery of proof of this fact her biographer bases one of her chief claims to public gratitude. Later historians, however, have not only failed to endorse her conclusions, but have practically ignored them. Under these circumstances Miss Strickland's earlier and sounder view of the matter has been retained in the text. Her later account of it may, however, be summarised here: "The duty of a historian now requires me, in justice to the memory of Elizabeth, to declare frankly that since the publication of her biography, my opinion of her conduct has been materially altered by the discovery of a contemporary document in the Cottonian Library, transferring the stain of that murder from her to her ministers. This document is apparently the minute of a Star Chamber investigation, containing the deposition of two persons named Mayer and Macaw, stating that the late Thomas Harrison, a private and confidential secretary of the late Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State, did voluntarily acknowledge to them that he was employed by his said master to forge the signature of Queen Elizabeth to the death-warrant of the Queen of Scots, which none of her Council could ever induce her to sign, and that he did this with the knowledge of four of her principal Ministers of State." Such is the story quoted by Miss Strickland as containing Elizabeth's vindication. The evidence will strike most readers as at least inconclusive, and it has been practically set aside by later writers.

NOTE G, page 304. SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S MARRIAGE.

That Raleigh's conduct with regard to his marriage was marked neither by candour nor courage must be admitted. But the further charge contained in the text rests upon slender authority, chiefly represented by a document described in *The Dictionary of National Biography* as a "forged news-letter."

NOTE H, page 314. ESSEX AND RALEIGH

The answer made by Essex, when urged by those about him to bring Raleigh before a court-martial, has been variously reported. Miss Strickland's version, to the effect that Essex replied that, were Raleigh his friend he would have done so, is the later one. In earlier accounts of the scene, Essex is made to say that, had Raleigh *not* been his friend, he would have acted as desired. The

later version of the story is undoubtedly more creditable to Essex, but the other bears upon it the stamp of greater probability, especially if the fact is borne in mind that the two were, at the time of the expedition, on unusually good terms.

NOTE I, *page* 345. ESSEX'S FALL.

Whatever was the immediate cause of Essex's disgrace, he had long been playing a double game. Miss Strickland scarcely lays sufficient stress upon the degree to which those nearest to the queen's person and highest in her confidence were engaged in intrigues with James. "My martyr Essex," as he was sometimes termed by the Scotch king, had long been of the number of those thus seeking to make their own future secure.

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